MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

OCTOBER 2018

CHAIN CULT

A PENETRATING LOOK AT THE VIRTUES OF MUSIC IN AMERICAN LIFE

MIGRA PUNK FEST

TROIKA

OUTER SPACE

FUCKED AND BOUND

DONTASK

HOARDER

VEUVESS

TIM AND THE BOYS

HET WARD

YALLAPUNK

MRR #425

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More information at our website: maximumrocknroll.com

TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

PETER AVERY

HECKSPOILER / LESLIE ACT
THRILLER – split EP
HOTLINE TNT – Cool If I Crash EP
THE LAMPS – LP
STRANGE PASSAGE – LP
WIMPS – Garbage People LP
PROUD PARENTS – LP
HIRS – Friends. Lovers. Favorites. LP
NOPES – Stapler LP
XURS – Cheap Future LP
V/A – Typical Girls (both LPs)

MATT BADENHOP

LA URSS – Nuevo Testamento LP
THE FITS – Bored of Education EP
CORNER BOYS – Love Tourist EP
MENTIRA – EP
CREMALLERAS – Mercado Negro LP
THE PROLETARIAT –45
PETITE – Torches EP
NEGATIV – LP + live
R.O.B.O. – Negación LP
V/A – Infection 1 2 x EP

HEATHER BLOTTO

PETITE – Torches EP
THE COMPLETERS – EP
TWO LAZY BOYS – live
SHELLSHAG – live
RICE HARVESTER – live
ONETIMERS – live
SHARK PACT – live
EVENING STANDARDS – live
FUTURE VIRGINS – live
CREMALLERAS – Mercado Negro LP

MITCH CARDWELL

LAVENDER FLU – LP + live
THE MODERN DANCE – live
CCR HEADCLEANER – live
WARP – live
SNOB – live
MOZART – live
THE MANTLES – live
DONKEY BUGS – live
CREMALLERAS – Mercado Negro LP
C. MEMI + NEO-MATISSE – 45

ROBERT COLLINS

COMMUNICATES – live
THE COMPLETERS – EP
WEEDRAT – live
DEATHGRAVE – So Real, It's Now LP
ENEMY – live
JAD – Wściekły EP
BURNOUT – live
FISSURE – live
LOW CARD DE LA MUERTE – CD
S.M.U.T. – live

JOAN DETORO

C. MEMI + NEO-MATISSE – 45
CREMALLERAS – Mercado Negro LP
LAVENDER FLU – LP
V/A – Infection 1 2 x EP
MENTIRA – EP
NEGATIV – LP
JAD – Wściekły EP
LA URSS – Nuevo Testamento LP
PETITE – Torches EP
STEFAN CHRISTENSEN – EP

MIRANDA FISHER

LAVENDER FLU – LP + live
STEFAN CHRISTENSEN – EP
CRUELSTER – Riot Boys LP
MIDNIGHT MINES – 45
MOSQUITOES – 12"
V/A – Typical Girls (both LPs)
CREMALLERAS – Mercado Negro LP
C. MEMI + NEO-MATISSE – 45
LA URSS – Nuevo Testamento LP
MOZART – live

LAYLA GIBBON

LITHICS – 45
CREMALLERAS – Mercado Negro LP
LAVENDER FLU – LP
MIDNIGHT MINES – 45
STEFAN CHRISTENSEN – EP
MOSQUITOES – 12"
DONKEY BUGS – LP
V/A – Typical Girls (both LPs)
PREENING – Nice Dice EP
LAVENDER HEX – LP
C. MEMI + NEO-MATISSE – 45

CAROLYN KEDDY

THE PROLETARIAT – 45
MOMMY LONG LEGS – LP
LITHICS – 45
LAVENDER FLU – LP + live
MIDNIGHT MINES – 45
UNCONTROLLABLE URGE – LP
V/A – Typical Girls (both LPs)
NOPES – Stapler LP
STRANGE PASSAGE – LP
THE FITS – Bored of Education EP

FRED SCHRUNK

Got hitched!

GREG HARVESTER

NOPES – Stapler LP + live
LA URSS – Nuevo Testamento LP
HORSE GIRL – CS
MOTORSAV – EP
CREMALLERAS – Mercado Negro LP
PREENING – Nice Dice EP
HOARDER – CS
MENTIRA – EP
LEATHER WEAPONS –CS
CORNER BOYS – Love Tourist EP
STRANGE PASSAGE – LP

RAY LUJAN

BAR STOOL PREACHERS – Blatant Propaganda CD
EX-MAID – Fair Sex LP
FALSE FIGURE – LP
HOTLINE TNT – Cool If I Crash EP
LITHICS – 45 / SPOILERS – CD
PATHOGENS – Patient Zero EP
THE PROLETARIAT - 45
PROUD PARENTS – LP
SQUARECROW – Before The Sun LP
STRANGE PASSAGE – LP

KENNY KAOS

On a quest to discover thee true heart of power pop.

MARISSA MAGIC

Mozart'd.

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Wanna be a shitworker?
Write mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

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Troika. Photo by Elsa Fosca.

ISSUE #425

We're now looking for contributions for a special all-Indonesian punk issue! We're looking for scene reports, interviews, and more from the Indonesian punk diaspora. Get in touch if you would like to help make this issue happen: MRR@maximumrocknroll.com

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VEUVE SS.....24
Genre-defying French punks look back post-breakup.

MIGRA PUNK FEST.....28
Recap of NYC punk fest focusing on immigrants.

HOARDER.....30
This Oly band is more than just feminist.

DON'T ASK.....37
Bay Area sweethearts reveal their sensitive side.

TROIKA.....43
Spanish punks on active resistance against patriarchy.

FUCKED AND BOUND.....47
They're pro-porn and proud.

TIM & THE BOYS.....52
On the ways punk resembles religion.

HET WARD COLLECTIVE.....59
Pittsburgh group centering trans feminine people.

YALLAPUNK.....62
Middle Eastern and North African punk fest.

OUTER SPACE.....66
Updates from Arcata, CA DIY show space.

CHAIN CULT.....74
Athens black metal fans turned post-punkers.

NEW BLOOD NEW BLOOD NEW

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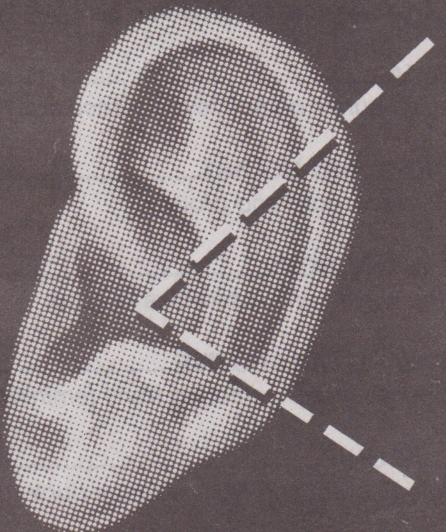
Are you a **YOUNG BAND** eager to have your work **EXPOSED** to the masses?

Do you have a **DEMO TAPE** you believe the **WORLD NEEDS TO HEAR!?**

Our NEW BLOOD feature is the easiest way outside of the review section to be included in Maximum Rocknroll! Every Friday, we post a new NEW BLOOD feature to our website, and yours can be up for consideration!

Send us the following info to be considered:



- Your band's name and contact info!
- A photo and credit!
- Give us some links!
- Tell us the date & location formed!
- How did your band come to be?
- Tell us what your lyrics are about!
- How do you describe your sound?
- List SOMETHING or SOMEONE you think folks need to listen to RIGHT NOW!
- What's in the FUTURE for this band?

Go to maximumrocknroll.com/new_blood to submit your band!

LETTERS

Send letters to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. Letters may be edited for length. Response not guaranteed.

Dear *MRR*,
I really appreciate issue 423, July 2018—so stoked that I decided to get a sub again, trying it out for six months, and I'll be sure to get a full year sub when the time comes. It's so great to see the direction *MRR* has swerved into, as this issue landed on my heart, eyes and experience as the best *MRR* I've read yet. I've read off and on for ten to fifteen years, a few years' worth of subscriptions in there, and I'm mega-geeked at such events coming alive such as Break Free Fest and The Multivrs Is Illuminated, and the great interviews and reports in last issue of these happenings, how special it is for all those involved, organizing, attending, participating. Seeing *MRR* comprised of continual challenge of the white straight male narrative and experience of punk all throughout recent issues is refreshing, exciting, sorely needed. Killer cuts from issue #423, such as Ari's "White punx, ask yourselves: who would you be without punk?" and Shawna's great response that had me drinking my late morning coffee, tearing up in joy and love and being so excited to be a part of punk — "...some people become irrelevant... they never actually grow or develop, and it's like, you could've grown, you could've shifted with the times and opened up and deconstructed some shit and been a part of this new wave, but you wanna cling to that old shit because at the end of the day, you want to feel superior." *Aghgh!* Seek out this whole interview if you haven't and other great parts of issue 423, like the Physique interview, that had me re-validated at my nerdiness and geeked to hear others speak to their place in chaos and punk friend support love and collaboration. I normally am bored to death by band interviews, the normal talk of what records come out when, what shows are happening, who plays what and maybe some inside jokes that I don't get—I get excited to see why people are playing punk, why they stick around, and is it something more than all that they know and it is all encompassing of their identity, sticking around not because their heart screams punk and they feel a part of something, but because it's what they've always done and they're simmering in a cesspool, not growing, doing things how they've always been done, and not expanding, learning, and open. Much love to *MRR* for all the hard work y'all do every goddamn month, and 1000% support for all punx making *MRR* what it is now, challenging us white men who have been the dominant voice of punk, overshadowing and ignoring all the amazing punk shit that has been happening since inception...

—Sock

PS I live in an isolated, jam-band / bluegrass desert valley called Moab, UT, home of gorgeous expanse of uninhabitable to human canyonlands and rocky country and insane, magical landscape and geography, and a few crazy national parks. Bands, punx, come thru and play a show with a few people at it but gorgeous surroundings and bomb ass homemade vegan grub, a solid place to stay and more stars than you may have ever seen! A few hours from SLC, and a few more from surrounding places in Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado... Hit me up at punxeatfruit@riseup.net.

MRR,
My name is Ilja from Berlin, Germany and I have been reading *MRR* since the 1980s, but this is the first time I have felt it necessary to write a letter. It takes a while for *MRR* to arrive around here, so when I read Joan's column in *MRR* # 422 about boycotting Israeli punks I assumed there had been some mistake with the months or numbers on the cover as this was surely another one of those crazy, over-the-top April Fool's jokes and should have been in the April issue. Imagine my shock when I read the letters section in the next issue to discover that this is dead serious.

The single biggest impact *MRR* had on punk was the way it championed international hardcore punk in the 1980s, a time when many punks only acknowledged punk from the UK or US. The release of the *Welcome To 1984* compilation album opened up many punks' eyes and ears to punk from places like Brazil, Italy, Finland, or Japan. *MRR* later continued this trailblazing tradition in releasing a record by Polish band Dezerter, smuggled out of Poland during heavy state repression. In fact, several punks from Eastern Europe were put in prison for corresponding with or sending scene reports to *MRR* in the 1980s when their mail was intercepted by the secret police. Promoting the international brotherhood / sisterhood of punk has always been the noblest and most far-reaching aspect of *MRR*'s activities.

That's why it is inexplicable to me why *MRR* would single out one country (incidentally, a rather small one with a punk scene not in the international focus as for example Barcelona or Portland) for a boycott. While BDS could be a viable political organization, it is not a part of the punk scene, no punks were involved in drafting their mission statement or any of their rules. So why should punks blindly follow their decrees? Did Saint Sid Vicious descend from heaven to deliver the Three Commandments of the BDS for his disciples to follow?

Personally, I think any person should be free to boycott any government or corporation s/he wants. But *MRR* is a music magazine covering DIY extreme rock music (as stated in its name!) made and listened to by social outsiders. Why would *MRR* submit to the policies of a political organization that has no base at all in the music that it covers? And why not then dogmatically follow other political organizations, like ALF, Earth First, PETA or Amnesty International, or whoever else is the flavor of the month? Who decides which political doctrine *MRR* (a music rag and not a sectarian political paper!) will have to blindly pledge allegiance to?

Let me point out the obvious: since Timmy Yo's death there has been an endless parade of coordinators that put in a few years and then quit. So, as they are in all probability only around for a few years, it's not for the current *MRR* coordinators to change the magazine's direction in such a radical, unprecedented direction and thereby cause its downfall. The core principles of the magazine (punk solidarity, internationalism, pro-DIY, anti-authority, anti-commercialism, etc) were laid down in the

1980s and have remained intact, to *MRR*'s credit, to this day. If you don't like them, go and start your own magazine. The vast majority of the content of *MRR* magazine is provided by the international punk scene and without contributors, *MRR* is (almost) nothing.

I would also like to question the whole point of this boycott. The aim of sanctions is to make the population of a country so miserable they will either overthrow their government or pressure it to change the policies which have lead to the sanctions (see current Russia / Ukraine conflict or US / Iraq in the 1990s). As Ran has written in his letter in #423, the vast majority of Israeli punks already oppose their government and want peaceful co-existence with their Arab neighbors. Seeing as Israeli punks are really the only people on earth to be directly impacted by a *MRR* boycott, which change of mind are you hoping to promote? Do you want to turn them into supporters of their government?

What actions could the punks of Israel take to have this boycott lifted? Even though they are only a tiny fraction of the population (a few hundred people as described in *MRR* #423) they are to have a revolution, overthrow their government, declare a state of anarchy and concede all demands of BDS. Oh, this seems like a perfectly realistic scenario. In fact, if this is so easy, why don't the punks of the USA lead by example and overthrow their own government first, before they cast judgement on punks from wartorn countries. People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw rocks!

Humanity repeats its mistakes over and over, but maybe we punks can do better. I have seen this kind of nonsense before. About twenty years ago, a politically left wing ideology calling itself "Anti-Deutsch" emerged from the German anti-fascist scene and promoted a ridiculous pro-Israel, pro-USA stance. Throughout the country, they used the same tactic: draw a line in the sand and declare that everybody on their side are the good guys and everybody else are the bad guys. People were bullied and forced to pick a side even if they had no knowledge of the subject and didn't really care. After some years, this ideology trickled into the punk scene and poisoned it. Networks dating decades were obliterated as punk was turned against punk. Punks who hated the government and Nazis but disagreed on that one subject wouldn't have anything to do with each other. The winners of this silly game were the authorities. You couldn't do a better job of crushing the opposition if you were in a secret service anti-insurgency program.

Punks of the world and *MRR* workers: you don't need to know anything about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict! You only have to ask yourself one question: Do you believe that a punk should be held accountable for the actions of the government where s/he lives?

If you irrationally think this is the case, the next punks in front of the "boycott firing squad" will surely have to be the punks of the USA, a country that has committed more war crimes than any other single country since World War II. Then it will be the Chinese punks for what their government is doing in Tibet and the Muslim minority Uyghurs in Xianjiang. Then it's the English for colonizing Ireland and so on and so on. No one will be spared from boycotting until we're all isolated but politically correct.

No punk on earth lives in a country that has not engaged in despicable acts. That's the nature of government. If you judge a person only in terms of their citizenship, you are perpetuating nationalist bullshit and collectively punishing people. There is no room in punk for nationalism. As a wiser man once sang: "*Punk ain't no religious cult! Punk means thinking for yourself!*"

MRR coordinators, please take a step back and calmly rethink your ill-advised decision. I don't believe you want to go down in history as the gravediggers of *MRR*'s international integrity and reputation. The international punk community will not stand for such bullying, so please call off this unfair, discriminating boycott.

Restore Reason,
Ilja

Ilja,

You sent us this letter on August 1st, and which means that you did not have the opportunity to read our letter that we included as a response to Gabriel Kuhn in issue 424, which goes into further detail about our stance regarding our support of BDS. We hope that you (and other readers out there who have not yet had the opportunity to read it) look it over as it answers many of the statements you included here. We will not repeat ourselves in our response to you.

We disagree with you fundamentally about the nature of Maximum Rocknroll, *and so would many of the former coordinators who are still regularly involved in the workings of our mag.* MRR *has* always *been a political project (Tim Yo was a Marxist!), but it is also one that has been in flux depending on the particular stances of whomever is coordinatng the magazine. It has a long, storied history of tackling political subjects, from feminism to anti-police organizing and a whole lot more. It is disingenuous to comment that our support of BDS and of anti-colonial efforts in general is a radical break from the decisions of coordinators in the past.*

You also question why punks should be involved in BDS if punks were not involved in the creation of BDS. We think that this is a faulty line of thinking. Punks should not be discouranged from participating in political organizations and movements merely because they were created by non-punks. This would exclude so many radical organizations that are worthwhile! We actively encourage punks worldwide to participate in radical movements and organizations that are fighting towards the active liberation of people through anti-colonial and anti-capitalist means. We find BDS to be one of those organizations without a doubt. And we believe that it is worth every punk's time to learn about the Israeli-Palestine conflict because it is still directly people and destroying the lives and livelihood of people (and not just punks) throughout the region. So much of punk's history has focused on fighting the status quo and attacking the ways power affects humanity, so it follows that we believe that punks must always fight colonialism, not just in the Middle East, but everywhere.

We wish to encourage readers to learn more about the international, Palestinian-organized non-violent movement to weaken Israel's complete grasp over occupied Palestine by reading bdsmovement.net

Yours,
The gravediggers of MRR*'s international integrity and reputation*

Functioning as an Anarchist in the world of Trump and Brexshit

In the past years and decades, voter turnouts have been falling; gone are the days where not voting was seen as a two fingers to those who'd fought for the right. In Britain's most recent election voter turnout was less than 70%, and in the US this number is even lower. Granted, issues such as Trump, Brexit, global warming, and ever increasing wealth disparity have been mobilizing some people to vote. Nonetheless, all the above happened, in spite of people starting to sit up and take notice, or perhaps because of it. The point is, if anyone who didn't want to see a fascist in the White House or the UK pull out of a communal arrangement originally established to keep Europe from tearing itself apart again looked at the results of their democratic efforts to prevent it they're surely feeling pretty defeated.

Any anarchist might be left thinking "well yeah, no shit." You might be inclined to take this as yet more evidence that we need to find another way to govern ourselves. If the system that's been trusted is fallible, then it needs replacing, or better yet, just demolishing and leaving in the history bin. That much has been obvious for a while. The real question is how. Maybe it's worth turning back to the broken thing you've just consigned to the waste pile.

If you can learn anything from the bastards at the top of the current shit heap it's that democracy can get you somewhere. In 2013, Chomsky suggested that the best way to disassemble the broken machinery that traps us is by climbing inside it and taking it apart from within. Perhaps this is the view anarchists and those on the left need to take. That doesn't mean to start buddying up to Trumpists and working your way into their inner circle in order to put them down in their sleep, as satisfying as that might be as an idea. Instead, perhaps the best thing to do is to engage with the broken system.

If the revolutionary left as a whole can form its own united, functional party within any given system, whether it be the American Republic, British Parliament, or anywhere the broken machinery persists, then maybe a change can be made. If that organized unit of left wing society can succeed in winning elections like Trump or the Tories or Erdogan by utilizing people's need for change and their frustration and just turn it into something productive rather than hateful, maybe something good can happen.

By climbing into the machinery and biding our time before launching our sabots into the gears maybe it's possible to bring it down. If ever there was a time when people were ready to accept a "radical" new way of thinking surely it's now. Riding this as a platform to prominence, anarchism and the left as a whole have a real shot at success and change. The traditional mode of revolution with people's armies and Molotov cocktails has proved effective to a point, but more often than not it's put down, and even if it makes it past this point, it results in a vacuum that gives way to tyrants.

The difference here, however, would be that by taking revolutionary left wing thinking and using the established machinery as a vessel, it could be possible to endow enough people with the drive for a better future that no such vacuum ever exists. Rather than a vanguard of detached elites, people could be mobilized en mass to throw down their chains and create their own world. This, however, requires the left to break an age old habit of in-fighting and trying to work outside of the system, rather than trying something different and really going for it. After all, everyone knows the old adage about the definition of insanity.

The world is on the cusp of complete disaster, governing seats worldwide are being filled with populist, fascist arses, and global warming is happening before our eyes, the Arctic Circle has literally caught fire this summer. However, to view the planet and the human race as a lost cause would not only be sad but also wrong. There's enough drive within societies everywhere to do something fundamentally amazing, it just needs redirecting from Trump to the circled "A" spray painted on the subway carriage and the real good that human beings are capable of when they're not busied with how much printed paper they've got tucked under their mattresses.

Maybe don't give up on the established democracy; rather than viewing it as an enemy and an obstacle, view it as a tool by which we can achieve the change we so desperately need. Revolution is possible without murder, without fire, and without destruction, just unity and an X on a piece of paper. People can wake from their induced dreams, they just need a prod.

"I am a fanatic lover of liberty, considering it as the unique condition under which intelligence, dignity and human happiness can develop and grow; not the purely formal liberty conceded, measured out and regulated by the State, an eternal lie which in reality represents nothing more than the privilege of some founded on the slavery of the rest; not the individualistic, egoistic, shabby, and fictitious liberty extolled by the School of J.-J. Rousseau and the other schools of bourgeois liberalism, which considers the would-be rights of each—an idea that leads inevitably to the reduction of the rights of each to zero. No, I mean the only kind of liberty that consists in the full development of all the material, intellectual and moral powers that are latent in each person; liberty that recognizes no restrictions other than those determined by the laws of our own individual nature, which cannot properly be regarded as restrictions since these laws are not imposed by any outside legislator beside or above us, but are imminent and inherent, forming the very basis of our material, intellectual and moral being—they do not limit us but are the real and immediate conditions of our freedom."

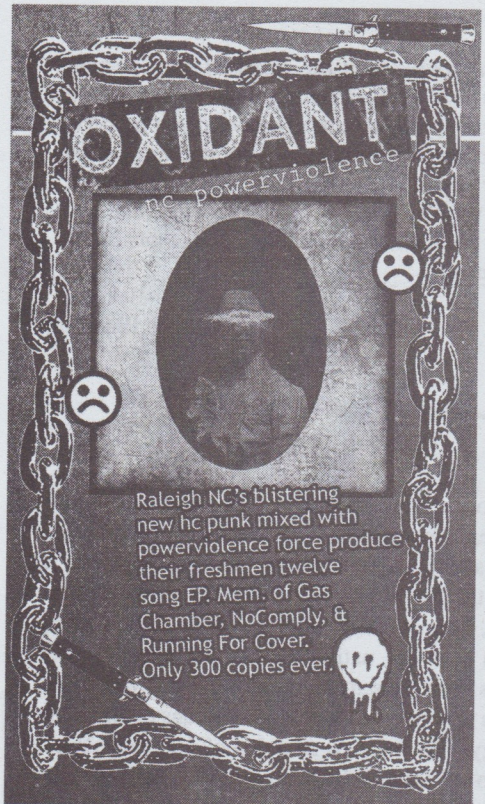
—Bakunin
—Scott Blackburn

MRR,

Hey. I also wanted to comment on the band you featured in your letters section in a recent issue. Something about casinos and fake native war whooping at the start of one of their songs. Me, I'm Navajo and I'm from the Navajo Nation Reservation in Northern Arizona. Being native, I don't really mind it, but don't be touring through my area. I'm sure the native punks will steal all your equipment. These days, you have to be mindful of shit you put in your songs, even if it is in support of Native Americans or any other race. Maybe an apology song for your next demo? Ha, yeah. But it did bring some light to the issue, which is cool, too. Well, stay up out there.

—Bran Scam

It's been a while since Maximum Rocknroll *has had a special issue. We're currently slowly working on compiling an all-Indonesian punk issue! We are looking for interviews with artists, political organizers, record labels, DIY space organizers, and a whole lot more throughout the Indonesian punk community. Please write in if you're interested in contributing or if you know voices that should be highlighted!*



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COLUMNS

Greetings, dear readers, and thank you for taking this opportunity to peruse my first ever column contribution to the almighty *Maximum Rocknroll*. I first stumbled onto this rag some nineteen years ago as a young suburban punk with no friends, stopping into some crummy chain bookstore on my way home from school. I can remember browsing past it on the rack of magazines whose titles I could barely make out since I was most certainly tripping on acid, which was a pretty regular thing for me in my overly bored early teenage years. Vividly, I recall lifting it off the rack to reveal the cover story titled "ARE KEYBOARDS PUNK?" which was very confusing to an uninformed teenage me. Eagerly, I began thumbing through its pages, skimming the columns and articles for something I might recognize, since I already very much identified as being punk. This was quite the eye-opening moment for me, as it showed me that this thing I had stumbled upon was much larger than I had the capacity to immediately grasp. Countless hours were spent over the coming days and weeks reading the issue over and over, cover to cover, while anxiously awaiting the arrival of next month's. I was hooked and have been an avid reader ever since. I developed something of a ritual; once a month I would stop by the book store while skateboarding home from school, and, using the money I probably would have used on another hit of LSD, would buy that months issue of *MRR* and completely absorb it. This obsession began to ripple outward in my life until all of my free time was spent researching bands, ordering records, trading tapes, and writing crappy guitar riffs to one day start a band. This became my complete identity.

Imagine, for a moment, my disappointment when I learned that people had this notion of the existence of some sort of "upper echelon" within punk. The whole concept of this made no sense to me. Were we not all the black sheep of our families, the losers in school with no friends, the targets for unexpected bottles hucked from cars speeding past while yelling some attempt at an offensive word in our general direction? Were we not all in this together? Hell, I recall my mother retelling the story of dropping me off at a gig to the rest of my family, stating "it was crazy! It was as if there was an entire parking lot full of him!" Silly as it may sound, that is exactly how I viewed it, too. I had found my people. If I saw other punks walking down the street, I would wave at them or cross the street to try to strike up a conversation. To this day, I rarely leave home without bringing my corruption briefcase: an orange, leopard print attache containing records, mix-tapes, zines, patches, boot chains, and all sorts of other punk garb to be given away if my path happens to cross that of unknown blossoming punkers. The very idea that there was some sort of a class system of different tiers of punk rockers with unapproachable higher ups who were too good for the rest of us lowly commoners did not sit well with me.

The "upper echelon of punk" was a constant topic of conversation with someone I was friends with for a few years and even travelled around the country with a bit. I had never really given such a thing very much thought, but how often it came up made me start to further consider it as potentially being a reality. I have been touring for many years now in almost every imaginable capacity. I have been a roadie for friends' bands, travelled to countless locations in about 30 different countries playing shows with my own bands, been a tour driver all around North America for national and international acts ranging from the unknown to bigger names, the likes of which teenage me would have jumped out of his skin with excitement to be around. I have quit numerous jobs and allowed my living situations and friendships to become strained by the amount I was on tour. At this point, tour has partially become an excuse for me to see friends that live in other cities. Concrete friendships can develop quickly when you're sitting up all night comparing life stories. The next time your paths cross, it can feel as if you have been friends forever. This has always been one of my absolute favorite parts about cruising down the highway from city to city in a rusted out 30-year-old van. The connections you can make with like-minded freakers in a short time is truly beautiful. I noticed that when good friends of mine would come out to meet me at gigs on tours with the aforementioned former friend of mine, he would often express that he disliked them because they were, according to him, a part of this alleged upper crust. Was this actually the case? If these were my actual friends, had I unknowingly become a member of the cool club and, if so, where was my identification card proving so? Where were all the discounts and perks you imagine come with being part of a secret society? Perhaps a ring or hidden tattoo that is flashed at any number of locations to receive faster service at restaurants, first dibs at the trash about to be thrown out, insider record trading, or free play on all coin-operated amusement machines?

While this idea has been in my head on and off for a number of years, I really started thinking about it more this past summer. My band RADIATION RISKS was out on the road and we played an incredible show underneath a bridge in Richmond, VA with DOXX and HAIRCUT. Loading gear and merchandise proved a little troublesome as the ground that had to be spanned consisted entirely of sharp, pointy rocks of varying sizes. I began searching for a reasonably level place to set up my distro, and I took note of a few other record label friends I have made over the years. Daniel Lupton of Sorry State Records and Alex DiMattesa of Grave Mistake Records were both in attendance and sat together amongst a pile of rubble, jagged rocks digging into their label-running buttocks, having a discussion. I approached them to say hello and overheard them chatting about the current issues plaguing those of us stupid enough to still run record labels in this day and age; after I chimed in with my two cents on this topic of "I am excited to lose money on all of these projects," a band started to play further into the abyss. While the early aughts gave birth to a number of record labels, very few of them have become as prolific or command as much respect as Sorry State, which began in 2002, or Grave Mistake, started in 2004. Now, I recognize that it is often quite difficult to view oneself objectively; however, I believe my label, Feral Kid Records, started in 2006, to

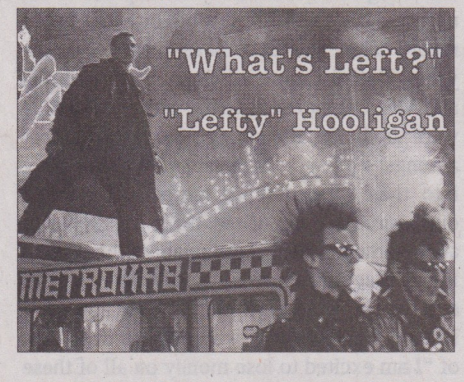
COLUMNS

be merely a single tier below them, and still reasonably respected as far as labels started in that timeframe go. The three of us finished up our conversation, and they went to join the crowd that had begun amassing to watch the band. After a short struggle to dislodge one of my feet from underneath a larger rock, I walked up behind them. Surveying the sight and really taking it all in, an overwhelming sense of camaraderie rushed over me. There I stood, looking over this beautiful scene of punks underneath a highway bridge, in front of a river, generator humming, band ripping, everyone enjoying themselves in a picturesque setting. This was truly as good as it gets. The top of the shit heap, so to speak. If even these two well-respected individuals who both run successful record labels and helped to shape the current state of punk have to crawl over this rugged terrain in order to get to a sketchy spot under a bridge to watch the same bands we were all there to see play off a generator until the sun goes down, then how can an alleged class system within punk even potentially exist?

In closing, if you truly believe yourself to be a member of this Wall Street caliber top 1% of punk, then I suggest you reconsider what you actually have to gain. Perhaps you've chosen the wrong subculture to be a part of if climbing the social ladders is of the utmost importance, because it truly seems to me that the highest rungs of this proverbial ladder wouldn't even help you reach the highway overlooking the aforementioned gig.

—Biff

What's in your Corruption Briefcase? Send suggestions to xFeral_Kidx@yahoo.com.



"The function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays."
—Søren Kierkegaard

"Lay down all thoughts, surrender to the void / it is shining."
—John Lennon, "Tomorrow Never Knows"

I stopped drinking on January 1, 2010. I did so under the guidance of Kaiser's Chemical Dependency Recovery Program. Right off, I went to meetings—physiology of addiction classes, AA meetings, LifeRing meetings, harm reduction meetings—and appointments with counselors, therapists, doctors, and psychiatrists. But once my body started to detox after 30 days, I got depressed. Real depressed. Clinically depressed. I did cognitive behavioral therapy for another eight months until I felt comfortable enough to call myself sober.

I was an atheist when I was a drunk, and I remain an atheist now that I'm sober. I crafted my sobriety out of various elements from the above list of recovery programs, not out of convenience but from what felt true. And the idea of a "higher power" never felt true. I could admit I had no power over my drinking, and I could surrender to my powerlessness. Just not *to* anything or anyone. I was able to surrender to an impersonal universe, to my situation, to existence itself. I was able to say "I give up." And that worked, without having to invoke a deity or "higher power" or any object / subject to which to surrender.

Actually, the act of surrendering works, with or without a "higher power." The psychology behind this was clearly described by Gregory Bateson in his essay "The Cybernetics of 'Self': A Theory of Alcoholism." Our Enlightenment definition of "self" equates to the conscious mind, which we believe controls us, our body, through our will power. But it is absurd to argue that consciousness—a part of the mind that functions through ten percent of the brain, generously speaking—can possibly comprehend, let alone control, the remaining ninety percent of the mind / brain, not to mention the rest of the human body, and thus constitutes the true "self" capable of controlling the whole individual.

Little wonder then that the fictitious Cartesian duality of mind versus matter causes problems. In the case of alcoholics, the disastrous assertion that "I can resist drinking and stay sober through sheer will power" can generate a dangerous alcoholic pride that in turn engenders suicidal risk taking. To repeat myself, it is ludicrous to argue that consciousness, which comprises considerably less than one percent of the individual, can control to any significant degree the rest of the individual. The act of surrender then is more than an acknowledgment of this lack of self-control and will power. "Philosophically viewed, this first step is not a surrender," Bateson wrote. "It is simply a change in epistemology, a change in how to know about the personality-in-the-world. And, notably, the change is from an incorrect to a more correct epistemology."

Giving up the illusion of willpower and self-control allows the individual to begin the process of recovery; that means embracing the act of surrender, of no longer resisting, of giving up. It doesn't mean believing in god, or a "higher power," or some external authority. The Black Panther Party pioneered a type of drug rehabilitation in which the heroin addict would "exchange the needle for the gun," thereby substituting the revolution for god. Unfortunately, when the guns fail or the revolution is inevitably delayed, relapse is more than likely. Surrendering to something external means there's still something out there to rebel against. Just to surrender, however—to give up the "self"—is to start finding yourself.

In rejecting this dichotomy between mind and matter, Gregory Bateson had a simple definition of what constitutes a single unit of mind based on the biology of the human brain. (1) A brain cell, a single neuron, is autonomous, capable of processing blood sugars into the energy needed to sustain itself and electrically fire. (2) The neuron operates on the basis of difference, the fundamental difference being firing or not firing, on or off, yes or no. (3) The neuron is connected via synapses with other neurons into circular or more complex firing patterns to form neural circuitry. Voila, mind! We have thought at its most elemental. From there we can take thought to the biological level (the body with its myriad cells), the social level (comparing how neurons operate in the brain to how humans operate in a social network), and the level of human consciousness (where neural circuitry evolves feedback loops to monitor other neural circuitry).

This model of human consciousness—of a limited self-awareness feedback loop monitoring the vast and immensely complex circuitry of the human brain and body—means that we are aware of only a very small part of our mental and biological totality. "From an evolutionary perspective, consciousness may have evolved as a sort of gatekeeper / librarian / manager / search engine meta-program to help organize and harness our vast mental capacity," according to author J.D. Moyer. "If there's a lot more 'in there' than we're capable of perceiving / utilizing with our tiny spotlight of consciousness, how do we get at the rest of it? How do we 'unlock' the ideas, solutions, connections, emotional strength, and otherwise untapped capacity of our subconscious (or superconscious) minds? […] How do we communicate with our own brains, thereby become a bit more conscious and a bit more free?"

Queue up a couple of mental practices that I'm loathe to call spiritual. Zen is as close to atheism as a religion gets and from my

limited experience sitting zazen I've benefited from simple mindfulness, dhyāna (observing the breath), and shikantaza (observing the mind) meditation. I've mentioned I'm a recovering Catholic, so part of what I've tried to recover is what good can be found in my upbringing. Marx called religion not just "the opiate of the masses" but also "the heart of a heartless world." There's something to be said for stripping god from prayer and making prayer into a deep form of talking to yourself. Paying attention to your mind and engaging in a conversation with it are the essence of a greater self-awareness.

Meditation, especially of the Soto Zen variety, is well understood. The same can't be said of atheist prayer. How can something like prayer, which purports to be a form of communication, work when what is being communicated with (e.g. god) doesn't exist? Against the original Cartesian fallacy—Descartes' "I think, therefore I am"—Bateson disciple Anthony Wilden proposed we use "We communicate, therefore we are" to account for both human individuality and sociality. If our individual and social identity is the product of communicating with others, then the "other" is crucial to that process. According to Lev Vygotsky, talking with our parents becomes talking with the "other," which becomes "self-talk" and eventually "inner speech." And while inner speech no longer resembles spoken language, it means that human thought evolves socially. Inner speech is learned through communication with others. What starts out as a communal conversation between people remains a social experience even internally because of our tendency to externalize our internal realities as a constructed "other." As a constructed externality, a fictive "other," it is intended to recreate our primal communal conversations so essential to our identity. We use this illusion of the "other" to talk to ourselves, for our conscious mind to interact with the non-conscious mind, for "me" to converse with "all-that-is-not-me" through prayer.

Prayer facilitated through a constructed "other"—whether a personal yet parental "god" or a more democratic pantheistic spirituality or even an impersonal, aloof universe—lets us feel less isolated, alone, and lonely. Prayer allows the conscious mind to query the non-conscious mind for guidance, inspiration, forgiveness, solutions to problems, improvements to life, and the fulfillment of emotional needs. Prayer permits us to express thanks and experience gratitude, letting us feel greater personal well being while sometimes "having our prayers answered" by the non-conscious mind in the form of innovative ideas and remedies, emotional fortitude and resiliency, and greater individual and social connectedness. Prayer without a god, without any spirituality, is not an oxymoron.

The symmetry of denying the existence of a god while constructing an externalized "other" doesn't mean slipping into a Cartesian solipsism, into denying the existence of the real world. Me, I surrender without a god to maintain my sobriety. But I also forego the need for constructed externalities. I frequently talk out loud, talk to myself, ask myself how I might help, how I might do better, or be better. According to Philip K. Dick: "Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away." I have no doubt that reality exists, albeit without a god or a spiritual dimension.

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Maine has never been very well-represented in the collective consciousness of New England's DIY post-punk history—it's fairly remote, sparsely populated, and tends to get lost in the strong gravitational pull of Boston just a few hours to the south. I lived in Western Massachusetts for almost a decade and, until fairly recently, I was still completely unaware of the DONNS, who could more or less be regarded as Maine's early '80s weirdo art-punk response to Rhode Island School of Design expats the TALKING HEADS. The five members of the band weren't even all centralized in Portland (the state's cultural epicenter), but also scattered throughout Maine in relatively small and far-flung towns like Penobscot and Brownville, which makes their off-kilter and sharp-angled deconstructed punk an even more unlikely product of that specific time and place. Like the TALKING HEADS, the DONNS started out at art school (in their case, the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Deer Isle), with some of the members originally hailing from New York, Toronto, and Providence, Rhode Island, which probably goes a long way in explaining the anxious downtown sound that the group eventually stumbled upon. They put out a self-released three-song single in 1981 to more or less serve as their demo tape, and anyone who knows their way around a *Hyped to Death* compilation or two will find a lot to fall in love with on it. The instrumental "5Ms" has the sort of repetitive, cracked future-punk vibe of Midwestern oddballs like DOW JONES AND THE INDUSTRIALS or DEVO (minus any synths, although it sounds plenty robotic), and "Edge of the Universe" is a frantic 43 seconds of trash-kitsch new wave about intergalactic relationships delivered with a DELINQUENTS-esque sneer while a glockenspiel is wildly bashed in the background. Perhaps the greatest use of tuned metal bars and mallets in 1980s American DIY this side of San Francisco's vibraphone-wielding BOB! That said, my real obsession with the 7" is due to the A-side "Double Agent," with its needling guitars, dark bass throb, and sarcastically deadpan vocals from Janet Strong on the subject of Cold War paranoia and the threat of a Russian invasion—total stripped-down, femme-punk genius, like a lost recording from NEO BOYS after they all transferred to an East Coast art school.

Speaking of completely bananas self-released obscurities from the early '80s, Bitter Lake just reissued the killer one-off 1980 single from Japanese new wave / no wave combo C. MEMI + NEO MATISSE. C. MEMI first started out as a folk musician in Osaka and ultimately drifted toward crafting minimal synth-pop solo soundscapes by the mid-'80s, but when she recruited some bandmates for what became the NEO MATISSE part of the equation, the results were just as jaggedly raw and disorienting as anything coming out of New York's loft scene at the time. "No Chocolate" twists and turns and flails through pretty much every conceivable dark alley mapped out in the post-punk underground by the end of the 1970s, and was apparently written as a rejection of the Japanese tradition of women giving gifts of chocolate to men on Valentine's Day (so fierce). Each time C. MEMI shrieks "*no chocolate!*" it's like shattering glass, with that TEENAGE JESUS-esque intensity segueing into some heavily vocoder-processed spoken vocals and an insistent, pounding piano line that recalls some bizarro-world take on "Psycho Killer" for five minutes of totally crazed, art-damaged scrawl. "Dream's Dream" on the B-side is a surreal fever dream of hushed vocals, metronomic clanging percussion and swirling synth, owing way more to gauzy European coldwave

than the *No New York* crowd. Completely off-the-hook, and a critical piece of '80s femme-punk history outside the typical US / UK-centric views of such things. (Bitter Lake, bitterlakerecordings.bandcamp.com)

The 2015 debut single from Vienna, Austria's LIME CRUSH was pure joy, an ecstatic vision of KLEENEX-inspired, shambling and see-sawing econo-punk that could be barely contained in each song's sub-two minute burst. They've been relatively quiet since that initial statement of intent (outside a CD-only compilation track and one side of a split single), so the news that the group finally had a full-length LP due out this summer was a very welcome development. And while they thankfully haven't lost any of those brilliantly loopy tendencies on *Sub Divide*, I was a little surprised to find out that one-third of the tracks on the 12" are just newly re-recorded versions of their previous vinyl output! Seems like an odd choice, but if you missed LIME CRUSH the first time around, I suppose it's good incentive to track this one down. The revised versions of "Graveyard" and "Baby" from the 7" still have all of the wiry, dance-this-mess-around guitar shimmy that would have made Ricky Wilson of the B-52'S proud, just presented in a slightly cleaner and tightened up form in comparison to the freewheeling giddiness of the original takes. "Pizza Bleibt" sets an absurdist group call-and-response about pizza and cops (at least as far as I can tell) to jumpy, stop-start rhythms, while the trebly guitar, wobbly beats, and off-kilter guy / gal shouts of "*I wanna be an academic!*" in "Academic" connect the dots between any number of untrained noisemakers in the MEKONS / *Messthetics* post-punk era and the riot grrrl-adjacent DIY punk saboteurs affiliated with the Slampt Underground in the early-to-mid '90s. The real curveball on the LP is a faithfully jangly crash-pop cover of "Can't Explain" by LOVE which essentially splits the difference between renditions of that same song that BLACK TAMBOURINE and the A-LINES have done before them, although having Calvin Johnson guest on your record in 2018 (see: "I Don't Wanna Die Alone") is a little eyebrow-raising in its own way. (Fettkakao, fettkakao.bandcamp.com)

Australian scrap-pop supergroup PRIMO! are back with a new LP called *Amici*, and I'll forgive the slight overlap in content with their really wonderful 2016 tape *Primo Cassetto* because I feel like very few people outside of Melbourne were actually able to get their hands on a copy (or at least I didn't). If you've fallen behind in keeping up with contemporary Aussie DIY genealogy, PRIMO! includes Xanthe (currently in TERRY) and Violetta (formerly of the SHIFTERS), and their approach to no nonsense, vaguely Flying Nun-accented, jangle exists somewhere in the same general constellation as active Australian concerns like CHOOK RACE, the STROPPIES, and DICK DIVER. The intertwining harmonies in "Ticking Off A List" and "You've Got A Million" recall the psychedelic otherworldliness of LOOK BLUE GO PURPLE with just the slightest trace of stark, chilly post-punk minimalism in the style of YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS, all punctuated with sparse, clockwork-precise drum beats that keep the songs from floating completely into the ether. But that isn't to say that they've shied away from any truly raucous displays on *Amici*—"A City Stair" works itself into a tense and nervous rush of intersecting guitar lines (one clean and sparse, one more urgent and distorted) and stuttering rhythms, but not before ending with some sinister keyboard drones and haunting group vocals, where PRIMO! pick up some of the loose threads that first originated in Rough Trade's late '70s / early '80s heyday and were more recently left behind by similarly-minded 21st century outfits like GRASS WIDOW or HOUSEHOLD. One of my favorite LPs so far this year, by a long shot. (Upset the Rhythm, primocassetto.bandcamp.com)

Say hey at ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds at futuresandpasts.org.

People Who Have Died (Reissue)

Since International Overdose Awareness Day is August 31st, I thought I'd reprint this story from around this time last year. I intend to update the list, someday, with people we lost this year, but for now this will have to suffice. I'm somewhat relieved to report that we will actually have *fewer* candles to light this year compared to this time last year, so there's one glimmer of light in this dark fucked up world.

[Note: Maximum Rocknroll *doesn't typically republish columns or other content, with occasional exceptions. We are happy to publish this column since it deals with a community that is exceptionally marginalized. —eds.]*

***

I didn't have a lot of time this month to write something that was gonna be very research intensive. We had our annual overdose vigil at work last week, and a lot of my time and emotional energy was channeled towards that. The tradition of The Annual Overdose Vigil has come to be like a somber New Year's party in the past couple of years. A real fucking macabre party, where everyone gets together and muses on what we lost this year, what we could have done better, what we plan to do better. And I swear everyone and their mother is hosting their own vigil now. I've been invited to five in the past month. It's exhausting.

We tried to spin this year's memorial and focus on the lives we have saved, not just those we have lost. There's something missing from the national dialogue about this "epidemic." Well, I mean, there are a lot of things missing, but the one I am referring to is the tenacity of drug users themselves. The overwhelming majority of overdoses that are reversed are done so not by medical professionals, but by other drug users. Because of the pervasiveness of Narcan in the past few years, many overdoses aren't even reported if they don't result in a death. Just like any other subculture or alternative economy, drug users learn to circumvent the systems that don't serve them, and innovate new survival techniques when faced with no other reasonable choices.

Anyway, I had been thinking a lot about people who have died and how it feels like I haven't been able to rally the time or emotional energy to properly grieve a lot of them. So I decided to do something I've been meaning to do for a while. The following are obituaries that I've written for a few people I knew, the way I knew them. All names have been changed for obvious reasons.

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Eric: Eric was the first person I knew through the Exchange who died. Words fail when it comes to describing Eric. He was nothing if not candid. He had what I inexpertly surmise to be a very severe case of ADHD, and it made him come off as childlike. I called him "fast Eric" because he was always wheeling and dealing and every single thought that popped into his mind was communicated with the rhythm and cadence of a seasoned auctioneer. Other people called him Adderall Eric. He was short and awkward, but it didn't slow him down at all. He wasn't loyal to any specific substance. Half the time he was drunk as a skunk, some days he actually took the Adderall that he so desperately needed. He rarely used dope. He usually appeared to be cracked the fuck out, but I think that was just the natural baseline he spent his whole life trying to mitigate. Sometimes it was actual crack, though.

When he was drunk, he loved to talk about his life to me or anyone else who would listen. A woman named Rebecca was a constant fixture in these stories. It wasn't the woman he married, but the love of his life, who had overdosed at least ten years prior to me meeting him. Rebecca's death was the single most defining event of Eric's life. She remains a bit of a mystery to me, but I would have loved to meet the yin to this dude's yang.

When he wasn't drinking he was almost coherent. His taste in music varied as widely as his taste in substances. Every single day he would come in, hover over the computer and blast whatever "classic" song he was feeling that day. Usually something like JUDAS PRIEST or AC/DC or worse, SUGAR RAY, DAVE MATTHEWS BAND or early '90s R&B. Every single day I would ask him to turn it down, or depending on the song, turn it off altogether. He usually acquiesced but gave me grief about being a hardass. He once gave me a Christmas card that had more words on it than I thought possible to squeeze onto a 5x7 piece of cardstock, and it was completely incomprehensible. I still take it out and look it over when I need to laugh. Here is an excerpt, "I love how you help care me know your hot still have a heart of gold me I love you wow I really appreciate your suport ns your more wild I so I'm ready to love learn grow me more in on recept no love sex ns r ride pushes passion to the limit me you could be mine ns a teacher I student with now but ?"

Mark: Mark was Eric's best friend. He spent almost every day in the drop-in. Mark was a ball-buster, through and through. Just like Eric, he was entrepreneurial, always supplementing his government income with side hustles. He had walking pneumonia for something like a year, but he continued to shoot cocaine *until* he died. He went through a phase of asking me out to lunch every single day and he was so tickled to hear me tell him every single day that he couldn't afford me.

One time he brought a taser into the drop-in and showed it to someone. It made a little *zap* noise. When we told him he couldn't bring weapons into the exchange he got real agitated and insisted it wasn't a taser, but a bug zapper. He got so aggro about it that he threatened a staff member and we had to ask him to leave for a week or a month or something. He maintained that it was a bug zapper long after the rest of us had dropped the issue, until what turned out to be almost his dying day. I guess he wanted to get it off his chest or impress me or something because he told me the item in question was indeed a taser all along.

I also happen to know that he broke into our space by propping open a window with a piece of wood before the drop-in closed for the day. He came back later that night to steal our brand new flat screen TV. This was years ago, before flat screens were standard. He never got caught and it was before I worked there. One time some other people helped me to break into an apartment building because they said someone was overdosing upstairs and they needed us. Everyone who lived there was there on a voucher, so calling 911 to report an overdose would mean risking their homes. Once we got in there, we couldn't find anyone so we left, but he found out about it and god was he pissed. He screamed at me that he was going to sue me, but I think he just needed to get it out of his system because he never brought it up again and commenced trying to win me over by the next week. Mark was a ball-buster, he was a furtive hustler, he was often a pain in the ass, but he was also smart and charming.

Tiffany: Tiffany was a loveable, loving, and, at times, jolly person who was everyone's best friend and the subject of constant concern. Tiffany was 47 years old and she was an alcoholic if I ever met one. She had really bad cirrhosis since I met her three years ago. Her stomach was constantly distended because of her liver disease. At times it got so bad that she appeared pregnant. Her cirrhosis would make her so swollen sometimes. One time she got so swollen that she had to get a ring sawed off her hand so she could get surgery. She lived on the street for years, through the cold northeast winters. I don't know how she did it. She had a lot of run-ins and a lot of bad nights on the street. I always thought it must take so much damn energy for her just to get up in the morning.

She was always quick to tell people how much they meant to her, but for some reason she was always losing her voice. She couldn't speak above a whisper most of the time. About a year ago, I ran into her on the street after not seeing her for a while. She had been staying at a shelter a couple dozen miles north of here trying to get clean. She got kicked out of that shelter a few times, but her mom was friends with the person who ran it, so she got more chances there than most. That time I ran into her was the last time I saw her, and she introduced me as her friend to anyone who would listen and told them how much she loved me and all of the people at the Exchange and how much we had helped her. She encouraged all of her friends that were not already members to become members, despite the fact that they didn't inject drugs. Then she took my hand and forced me to dance with her to a LED ZEPPELIN song that some guy was strumming on the guitar on the sidewalk. The last time I saw her she hugged me and told me she loved me probably no less than ten times. I was relieved to hear that her mother was with her when she died in the hospital rather than freezing to death on the street like I was always afraid she would.

JR: JR spent most of his life in prison for robbing banks, stores, and bingo halls. He was infamous for wearing a clown mask during robberies. While he was in jail in the mid-'80s, he contracted HIV. He told me how it happened; it was just before anyone was talking about the virus, or at least before he knew about it. He told me about how they used to pass around a homemade needle with a plastic tube attached to it to shoot dope. It would make the rounds back and forth between every cell. He said that he remembers seeing dried blood caked into the needle but shooting it anyway. As far as he knew he was gonna be in prison his whole life anyway so what's the difference? He was about 6'3" and couldn't have weighed more than 120, lbs. He looked hollow. He was 60 when he died but looked like he could have easily been 80. He had dementia. One time I walked up to him on the sidewalk while he was being questioned by five cops about a recent ATM robbery. He vaguely fit the description of the suspect. I walked up to this happening and realized he had no idea what was going on because when they told him about the robbery he literally said "No way, that's crazy. What a coincidence, I used to rob banks too!" I'm glad I was there to intervene that time.

People were fiercely protective of him, and most of the time he had no idea. He was very gentle but liked a good thrill. In his younger life he was a skateboarder and a unicycler. This is how his sister remembered him: "He broke out of prison several times. One time, while racing down the interstate, on the run in a stolen car, he pulled over to help a woman change her flat tire. He just couldn't leave her there. This is who he was. There was an inmate who was a grandfather and always talked about his grandkids. JR had me write a children's story and send it to a tattoo artist inside for illustrations. He sent all the pages back so I could make a book. JR knew the grandchild's birthday was approaching and the grandfather had no way of sending a gift. He knew what it would mean to both the grandfather and grandchild. He asked me to send extra stamps and stationery because a young inmate wanted to take his life. JR said he couldn't tell the kid what he could or couldn't do but that it wouldn't be fair not to write his mom a letter and at least give her some closure.

Last winter, when things were getting really tough and he was getting kicked out of the shelter for things beyond his control over and over again, one of our staff went to his payee to get him some money and them took him shopping for a tent a lantern and some other camping supplies. He lost all of the supplies

within one day. This happened every time he got something new. He got off of probation just weeks before he died—the first time he had not been court-involved in 36 years. He came back to the drop-in and gave everyone he saw a high-five and told them he was finally free. He said "I've never been a free man before, you guys are the best."

I heard him say over and over again that all he wanted was a room with a bed and a TV so he could die peacefully. JR had never had an address of his own as an adult. His lengthy record made it almost impossible for our staff to help him find housing. The day JR finally found out that he was getting a room at the Y was probably the happiest day of many of our recent lives. He hung out in the drop-in all day and I watched him cry again and again and again as he told each person who came in that he was finally getting housed. His dementia wouldn't allow him to remember who he had already told so this process went on for days. I can't believe how many people I saw cry tears of joy for him. One of our our staff took him shopping for furniture and helped him to set up his room at the Y. We found a TV for him and went over to his room repeatedly to help him troubleshoot his remote control. Even after he was housed, he still chose to spend every day with us in the exchange. He lost six pairs of keys in his first month of living at the Y. He got sepsis and died of AIDS a few weeks ago. JR was the fucking best and I'm glad I got to know him before he died. His memorial service is this weekend.

Chris: Chris came from some rural area west of the city. He was young and tame. He was a quintessential nerd who liked anime, *Star Wars*, video games, and the *His Dark Materials* series. If we ever ran out of milk or sugar he would run to 7-Eleven and buy us a bunch to keep in the exchange. He loved animals. He loved having a job. He hated being bored and dependent. He was impressionable and hung out with people that you would think he had absolutely nothing in common with. He had a bunch of long stints of sobriety and, when he was sober, he was really proud of it.

He moved away for a while or was in a program or something. Two of my coworkers saw him on the train two weeks before he died. He said he hadn't been coming around because he had gotten sober and he didn't want to tempt fate by hanging around his old haunts. He was wearing a suit, on his way to a temp job, and he was so fucking elated to see them. He said he was doing great, he was working, and he missed us all very much. I went searching for him on Facebook to help jog my memory of him for this obit. His last couple of posts were about getting clean, some pictures of horses, him doing construction work, and the results of a quiz entitled "how and when you will die." He overdosed and died a few weeks after posting that. He was 29 years old.

Jose: Jose was a quiet and warm person who was known for being level-headed. He grew up with JR and another one of our members, Sugar. Sugar was a few years older than him. He told us all about their meet cute when they lived in the same neighborhood as kids. Sugar was a teenager who had just held up a store and pulled up to his street in a stolen car. Jose was eleven years old at the time and was an unassuming lookout. He knew the cops were coming before anyone else. He went right up to Sugar's house, knocked on the door, and told him the cops were on their way. Sugar said they had never talked before. Jose and his group of eleven-year old bandits got in the stolen car, put it in neutral and steered it to the back of the house where Sugar was waiting for them. Sugar made it out and was on the lam for a good six months before the law caught up with him.

Jose was mild-mannered yet eloquent. He would frequently show up looking sharp in business suits and carrying briefcases. I honestly don't know what the fuck he was doing out there in the world, but after he died I learned he had a number of different lives. He grew up with JR and watched out for him like an older brother, though he looked at least 30 years younger. He had jobs doing construction, working with kids, and in IT. Jose was an occasional user, and he never appeared to be high or really anything other than his best sweet quiet self. He had two kids and ten siblings. I never knew that he had been married or had kids until his estranged wife showed up at the Exchange to tell us he had died.

Petey: I did not like Petey. He scared the shit out of me. He was in his 30s. I met him for the first time the day he got out of jail. He was really intense, a fast talker, and quick to escalate any situation. He was rarely in control of himself or his behaviour. Plus, he was prison-jacked. He creeped me out a little bit. He started getting his mail sent to our office after he got out of jail because he didn't have another address. He tried to get checks sent, SSI or something, even though I had told him many times that he can't use our address to have money sent here. He was due to get a check one week on a Monday. He kept calling the agency that supposedly sent it, and they maintained that they had, so everyday he would come in more and more determined to get it, even though we didn't have it because they never sent it. Every day of this particular week he got more and more aggressive and persistent until Friday when he had fatigued every ounce of self control and just completely lost it when I told him that the mail hadn't come in yet. He started yelling at me unrelentingly. He shoved past me through to the main office and just ran around basically screaming, looking for someone to fight like if he got one clean punch in it he would be an instant thousandaire. Someone else finally calmed him down. I think he just needed to hear that the mail wasn't in yet from anyone else other than me because at this point he was convinced I was just out to get him and he was running through the office saying as much. I've watched plenty of people become detached when rage takes them over, but it was the first time in a few years that I felt like I was the subject of that fury and it scared me. The next week he came in like none of it ever happened, and I believe that he believed nothing out of the ordinary had happened. He was never nice to me and was a crude misogynist. A few months after that incident, his body was found in the back of a U-Haul truck. He overdosed and died alone. His body wasn't found for days. I thought it was crazy how this big tough guy who wasn't afraid of anything could be taken down out by such a small thing. Just a few grains of Fentanyl. I felt guilty for not liking him for a while after he died, but I don't anymore.

Sam: Sam had the bluest eyes I have ever seen. He was one of those people I think you would call conventionally handsome. He was always sort of grounded, never out of control, never nodding out. He was one of those guys that normal people would not believe was homeless. He was a sweet guy and he was capable, he took care of other people's problems. He overdosed and was in coma for at least a month before he died. I found it ironic and sad that he had never used drugs until his late 30s when he met his second wife. Once he finally died, she got a dog and got clean.

Linda: Linda was a force to be reckoned with, and she knew how to work the system to get what she needed.

Her fiery determination was known to cause some friction around the space. She was a heartbreaker. Last fall when she was getting out of jail after a two month stint, a guy came into the drop-in saying, "I'm really excited, my girlfriend is getting out of jail today" and told us about how he had found them a place to live and the money he had saved up for her. A few minutes after he left, another member walked in and said "I'm really excited today, my girlfriend's getting out of jail..." When Linda did finally come back to the drop in, she showed us a letter from yet another suitor who was waiting for her release.

She was the mother of three kids and a former hairdresser. I knew all about each one of her kids and her love life. One summer she met this rich guy on the street. He had just inherited a bunch of money, like $50,000. He didn't use heroin and I don't think he knew

that she did. I didn't see her that often that summer, but she came by again in the fall to tell me they spent all of the money on blow and dope in just three months. I wasn't sure if I believed her that they could "blow" through all that cash so quickly, but I never alluded to her that I thought so. She insisted on showing me bank statements, though, and came back with them a month later and it was true. The last time I saw her, she was pleading with a shelter worker on the phone to let her back in because she had been kicked out for getting high but she swore she wasn't nodding out, she was just tired. She was literally nodding out as she had this phone conversation and the woman on the other end must've been calling her on it because she kept yelling "I'm not high right now, my grandmother just died and I have been crying. I'm really upset." She must have had a lot of grandmas because I have heard her use this excuse on at least five separate incidents prior to this one.

I realized I had never been to a Catholic ceremony prior to Linda's death. I didn't even know that I knew her mother, and that I had vaguely known her for years until after the funeral when we were leaving and she said "it means so much to me that you came." I loved Linda. She wasn't alone when she died. She was with people who were supposed to be taking care of her and they failed her.

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So there's a few people who have died. Not an exhaustive list, but representative of complicated, smart, frustrating, caring, beautiful normal fucking people all very different from one another. All had different habits, different desires. They all died too young, but I suppose that's how it goes these days. I wish that when Annual Vigil Time rolls around next year that there are less candles to light, but the world doesn't appear to be heading in that direction. Here's hoping.

I used to love when people would ask for music recommendations on message boards. I could, with basically no human interaction, quickly scan a giant list of songs for stuff I've never heard of, give it a quick try, and move on to the next suggestion. So recently, when an acquaintance of mine asked the æther to list their favorite power pop bands, I was obviously more than a little excited to read through the list. My mouth watered as I imagined the rare gems I would find within. This information-seeker was a somewhat notable and well-toured punk, so I imagined that the bands within would come from all sorts of regions with rich histories of power pop that I'm totally unfamiliar with. After all, if someone asked me for some advice on good power pop bands, I'd point them in the direction of all of my favorite small-of-fame Buffalo bands from the golden age of punk. And so, I opened the thread.

After a couple of reasonable suggestions, the thread took a very strange turn. Hoots and howls of "Quad P" and "Power Pop Pop-Pop" began to pour in and totally overwhelmed the thread. I was a little confused. "It's gotta be some Poptopia-esque comp, right?" I thought. And so, with the whole wealth of human knowledge at my fingertips, I looked it up. Staring back at me was a two-part, 50-minute-long comedy bit from WFMU's Best Show. Power Pop Pop-Pop isn't some glorious and expansive eight disc power-pop comp. It's not some poorly named, but unbelievably catchy power-pop band. It, or he, is merely a fictional character from a comedy bit.

Adults, and a lot of them at that, when earnestly asked who their favorite power pop band is, listed some fictional character. That's like listing "punk on bus" from Star Trek IV as your favorite punk band. Not the undeniable punksploitation banger "I Hate You," from that scene. Not Kirk Thatcher, the actor who portrayed the "punk on bus" and wrote and performed said song. Just the actual character. I was obviously a little disappointed with humanity—or at least the twenty people whose opinions I thought I trusted who claimed Power Pop Pop-Pop as their favorite power pop band. But hey, since that many people think this comedy bit is so much better than the Modernettes or the Mo-dettes, I was going to give it a listen.

And that's when I realized that I, in fact, hate power pop. You did it, WFMU. You ruined a genre of music that I thought I loved. More specifically, the segment definitionally changed my understanding of that genre of music. During the bit, which is almost an hour long, there are scores of band names mentioned. A good deal more than half are totally made up bands, a few of which also have made up songs, members, and discographies. But, if you pull out the fake bands, there is still a really long list of what these radio personalities (Tom Scharpling and Jon Wurster) consider power pop, and it has absolutely nothing to do with the genre as I know it. Among songs that typify the genre in their minds are "Day Tripper," "Surrender," "September Girls," and "Where Have You Been All My Life." These are songs by a '60s Merseybeat band, an arena rock band, and a pair of songs that might as well be by the EAGLES. Host Tom Scharpling retorts that his favorite bands of this style are VELVET CRUSH, TOMMY KEENE, and the POSIES, all of which are unlistenable '90s middle-of-the-road garbage. Arena Rock? Merseybeat? Indie? This was not my understanding of power pop.

Back in 1980, when she was writing for *Creem*, Lauren Agnelli coined a rival term for the power pop that we all love. She called it "post-pop," and used it to refer to her band, NERVUS REX, and a handful of other hook-minded bands playing CBGB at the time. The term itself, rather than implying that these bands and musicians had somehow moved past the realm of pop and onto something new, was a play on the phrase "post-punk." Where that genre was founded by former punks and other punk-adjacent musicians, so too was post-pop born from bands with punk pedigrees that decided to head in catchier direction than their more angular post-punk counterparts. Almost all my favorite power pop bands fall into this category—pop music made by people who had previously been in punk bands. SATAN'S RATS became the PHOTOS; the GO-GO'S are comprised of former members of the METROSQUAD, the EYES, the GERMS, and EDIE AND THE EGGS. Some cases might not have a punk lineage, but bands were still punk-adjacent. Like NERVUS REX, bands like the LINES were obsessed with TELEVISION and the TALKING HEADS and played at Max's Kansas City and CBGB. JOSIE COTTON has been running a studio with GEZA X for years.

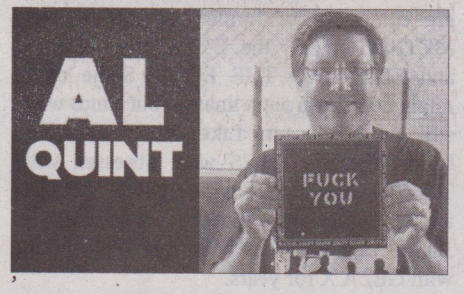
And then there are the small towns where the punk scenes and power pop / new wave scenes were completely one-in-the-same. In Connecticut, the FURORS and the BATS were considered punk and played their brand of strange but sugary pop right alongside INTERNATIONAL Q. They all played super short, simple, originals and got beat up and called names by jocks together.

That's my understanding of what power pop is. It's a reaction to unnecessary extravagance of pop-rock. At its best, it's verse-chorus-verse-chorus—with maybe either a bridge or a hook in the intro. It's two minutes or less. It should focus more on a catchy melody than on musicianship or fancy arrangement and production. Exuberance over talent. Power over gloss. Pop over all. And all of that (except, perhaps, the "pop") describes the golden age of punk, too. It's no surprise, then, that the best power pop is made by former punks. They brought their punk-honed sensibilities with them, and it works.

But clearly, Tom Scharpling and Jon Wurster disagree with me. To them, all pop-rock is power pop, regardless of sound, ethos, or songwriting involved. And I guess I shouldn't be surprised. I couldn't possibly imagine sitting through an entire episode of the Best Show, and I find Jon's band SUPERCHUNK to be an even bigger snooze-fest. Of course they like different things than I do; I hate their art. We have different sensibilities.

So, after this revelation, what do I do? I could abandon the phrase "power pop," as it seems to be even more meaningless than calling something "new wave." That would require me to start using Lauren Agnelli's phrase, "post-pop" in earnest, and seeing as it requires a fairly length explanation, is probably not very helpful when trying to quickly reduce the sound of a band to a word or two. The simple answer is that the next time I hear someone mention that Quad-P is their favorite band, I'll just have to wince internally, know that the suggestion is coming from someone who likes comedy and not music, and quietly mumble some curses about how much I dislike the Best Show, its hosts, and usually, its fans.

—Nicky Reynolds



A TALE OF TWO SHOWS

Over the summer, I saw punk shows on two successive nights and there were pluses and minuses with both of them. The first thing that should be mentioned was there was very little crossover between the two. I'd be willing to wager that there were probably less than ten people who went to both. The first was called "The Boston Massacre" and was put together by Sean Cringe, who used to book a lot of punk and hardcore shows in the early '90s. This was a reunion of '80s and '90s era Boston-area bands, including JERRY'S KIDS, STRAW DOGS, MOVING TARGETS, MUNG, and a short set by BULLET LAVOLTA. Most of the sets were spot-on, and JERRY'S KIDS, as always, laid waste to everything in front of them. Lots of old-timers came out of the woodwork for this one. That weekend was my 40th high school reunion, which I decided to skip (for a few reasons) and, in all honesty, this show was the real reunion for me. I didn't get as much of a chance to socialize as I would have liked to—this club keeps the music at an ear-splitting volume between sets, making conversation near-impossible unless you're yelling in my ear.

One thing I did notice was there were only white cis men playing in the bands. For most of the "legacy" punk shows I go to in Boston and environs, that's the case. Fortunately, that's changed somewhat with the DIY punk and hardcore shows I attend. There aren't that many people of color, but there are certainly more than cis men playing those shows, although that's still not always the case.

The early Boston hardcore bands were almost exclusively white cis men. The sole exception was IMPACT UNIT, Dicky Barrett's first band, which had a woman on drums and Black bass player. There were plenty of women involved through show booking, photography, radio, and zines, but you didn't see that many of them on the stage.

I'm not trying to be "woke" (god, I hate that term) or condescending or patronizing. It's just something I didn't notice for quite awhile and it had to be pointed out to me, which I suppose is kind of pathetic. I got a wakeup call about fifteen years ago, when I published the most recent—I still refuse to say last—print issue of *Suburban Voice*. I was at a show, talking to a female acquaintance who I'd known for about a decade. She played in a band and thanked me for giving them a good review, even though she said (paraphrasing), "I know you don't like us that much." Which is completely untrue and I told her that.

She went on to say that she was kind of bummed about the rest of the issue, though, because there weren't any pictures or interviews of female musicians. She was essentially accusing me of being sexist. Maybe it was unconscious sexism—who knows? But I was taken aback and put on the defensive at that particular moment, saying that I just covered what I liked and wasn't discriminating. I did neglect to mention to her that the last band I'd played in, in 2001, had two women.

It did get me to thinking about it, though, and, since then I've tried to not just play music made by white cis men on my radio shows or review only those bands and, on the rare occasions I've booked shows, I try to do the same thing. I don't expect any pats on the back but I'm just acknowledging that, perhaps, I should have considered the lack of inclusion in the punk scene in the past. And acknowledge that it continues to be an issue.

The other show, the next night, was at a DIY space and wasn't that well-attended. There were two local bands, OPTION and SKRAWL and two out-of-towners—TIGHTLIP, from Ottawa, and STAGGER, from Philly. The band membership was more diverse than the previous night's show and all the bands were very good. The only problem was a good chunk of the crowd couldn't be bothered to watch the touring bands. In fact, when they were both starting to play, there were only a handful of people and, for each of them, I went outside and yelled for people to get inside and watch them. I got some funny looks, but some people did trickle in for STAGGER but somewhat less for TIGHTLIP. I don't get it—you're at a show, you've paid your money and you want to stay outside smoking, drinking and yakking? For some reason, it bugged me more than usual that night because there weren't a ton of people to begin with. Their loss because both bands kicked ass.

I got into a spirited discussion about this online; one friend said (albeit somewhat good-naturedly), "not if they stink and you were there for the opening band(s)." I'd say that most of the people there had probably never heard the bands—maybe some checked out their Bandcamp pages—but why not give them a chance? I'll generally check out at least a few songs. Someone else pointed out that maybe the out-of-town bands should play in the middle of the show. That does happen, sometimes, and probably isn't a bad idea if it's a lesser-known band, although the two locals were also relatively new. I think it was SKRAWL's first show.

I stopped being idealistic about punk a long time ago—but, to me, DIY isn't the same as a club show. I'd like to think it's a self-contained, mutually supportive entity and that people are there to take part. Maybe discover their next favorite band. But what do I know? I'm just an old guy yelling at the clouds. Now get off my lawn!

SOME DERANGED MUSIC

Deranged Records has been going strong for over a decade and a half at this point and continues to crank out some quality records. The latest batch includes some gems, although not all of them fall into that category. The latest 7" by Chicagoans TARÄNTULA maintains their full-bore power on their third 7" *The Very Best of Sex and Violence*. They could have added "drugs" to the title, as well, as three of the songs here deal with substance use and abuse. The musical attack remains muscular, mid-tempo punk rock'n'roll with guttural vocals and, as I've written before, it sounds more complete and focused than Tarantüla's predecessor, CÜLO.

DAMAGERS' self-titled 7" is a vinyl pressing of their demo from last year and provides a bruising hardcore punk assault with a bootboy undertow. Nothing new or different, just loud and energetic fodder with floor-thumping drumming and plenty of anger.

SPIRITUAL CRAMP probably take their

name from the CHRISTIAN DEATH song but don't sound like that band, and the lead off track on their *Police State* EP is called "Spiritual Cramp" but it's not a cover version. It's also the best song by far, a feisty, energetic garage punk stomper. Unfortunately, the other three songs don't live up to that—the lilting reggae of "850 Bryant," the reggae / rock of "I Feel Bad Bein' Me," and melodic "Blood Clot" are a complete letdown after that promising start. Strong lyrical messages describing the grittiness of their San Francisco home, but the music doesn't match up.

NO PROBLEM's third full length, *Let God Sort 'Em Out*, is their first in four years, and they still offer urgent and earnest melodic punk. The title track is a collage of musical and audio samples, with the main rhythm coming from DYS's "Wolfpack" (cool) and that fades into their West Coast-inspired sounds, albeit with a darker undertow at times. "Warpaint" comes on strong with a vintage ADOLESCENTS-tinged approach. "Eyes Of A Killer" and "Let It Bleed Pt. II" both have a sinister edginess. The heart-on-sleeve sentiment sometimes gets more than a bit obvious—"No Justice No Peace" comes to mind—but it's in the right place.

CRIMINAL CODE are another band who haven't been heard from in a bit—*2534* is their first album since 2013 and second overall. They continue to ply melody-driven punk mixed with goth but, while they had a shimmery rawness in the past, that's been cleaned up on this new collection. There are strong hooks on such songs as "Exiled" and "Cancer," but it seems as though some of the band's previous edginess has been lost. The expanded lengths on the closing tracks for each side tend to drag things out. Still, they exhibit solid tunecraft and, at times, you can hear echoes of a band like the CHAMELEONS. It just doesn't always leave all that strong an impression. (www.derangedrecords.com)

FUCK THE WORLD... AND YOU TOO!

...or FTWNU2 for short. That's the moniker for a relatively new label out of Minnesota. They specialize in brutal hardcore. Not a pop song to be found on the pair of 7"s or two CDs that showed up here. The HIVE / NO SKIN split 7" is a rager. HIVE have a crusty heaviness on their two songs, punctuated by soul-screaming vocals. But I prefer the flip. NO SKIN, in case you missed my review of their 12" awhile back, includes Ben Crew from IN DEFENCE and DAMAGE DEPOSIT. Rabid, raw hardcore punk done the right way, boiling over with venomous intent.

BONEFIRE also pack a lot of rage into their *Murderapolis* CD. Energetic Motörcharged hardcore punk, pulling a few early FINAL CONFLICT tricks out of their collective hats, er, amps. Nothing to change the world, but the production is raw and the there's some nasty bass rumble underneath everything. Includes two somewhat unnecessary live tracks, but the five studio tracks are worthwhile.

I'm not as enamored with DISSIDENT CLONE. Their *Civilized* CD is pretty much by-the-numbers grind / thrashcore / death metal created by two guys handling all the instruments and vocals. Blasting away in pretty much tuneless fashion. *Creating The Consumed* is a vinyl pressing of a 2014 recording, just guitar and drums, no bass, maybe a little more on the death metal side of things. (PO Box 822, Hopkins, MN 55343, www.ftwnu2.com)

A FEW MORE

MALE PATTERNS had a song on their first 7" called "Pissed and Old," and you could say they're just as pissed on their new 12" *Headaches*. Maybe more so. Definitely older, as the 7" came out in 2015. Well-played anger-driven hardcore that's semi-catchy, like a cross between 86 MENTALITY and POISON IDEA. The title track is a cogent expression of frustration and anger borne of life's monotony. Yup, life's a pain in the ass. So play loud and chase those negative feelings away or at least use it as some sort of primal therapy session. (Peterwalkee, www.peterwalkeerecords.com)

A while back, Feel It Records put out an unreleased LANDLORDS album, *Fitzgerald's Paris*, and now there's a reissue of this Charlottesville, VA band's 1984 debut *Hey! It's A Teenage House Party!* Two of the people, John Beers and Charlie Kramer, went on to do HAPPY FLOWERS. It's a joyous hardcore punk smorgasbord that incorporates the standard thrash of the day along with some tuneful and heavy metal elements. Collegiate wiseasses making a fun racket. There's also a cover of MOVING SIDEWALKS' (Billy Gibbons from ZZ TOP's early band) garage / psych chestnut "99th Floor." Some of the wit from that showed up later on in the FLOWERS was certainly incubated in the LANDLORDS, although there could be darker lyrical material, as well. Includes a booklet with lyrics, flyers, photos, and reminiscences and the download tacks on another eighteen demo songs.

Another vintage unearthing courtesy of Feel It is a two track 7" by INSINUATIONS. Obscure, quirky punk from Richmond ca. 1980. Punk is kind of a misnomer, so would be art-punk or post-punk but INSINUATIONS don't follow your standard KBD blueprint. Two offbeat, engaging compositions with male / female vocals and barbed, minimalist instrumentation. Satirical lyrics about a nuclear meltdown on "Prompt Critical" and a poke at the so-called American dream for "US Muscle." Fun. (Feel It, www.feelitrecordshop.com)

I mentioned OPTION earlier—they have a pretty damned good demo out called *The Hour Of Action*. This three piece includes Dan from NO SIR I WON'T and BRAIN KILLER and Sam from INNOCENT and MUNDO MUERTO. Continuing in a somewhat similar vein as NSWI, only sharper. Punchy UK-style anarcho punk with an urgent delivery and top-notch playing—buzzing guitar and a pumping rhythmic undertow along with outspoken lyrics given a forceful delivery. And it's all quite catchy, especially "The Front Page." (anotheroption.bandcamp.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960, subvox82@gmail.com, sonicoverload.net, subvox.blogspot.com

I believe that band relationships are just as important as any romantic relationship. Your bandmates require time, attention, patience, forgiveness, stimulation, trust, and a general sense of commitment, same as a partner. Often you'll spend more time with your bandmates than your partner and your partner will get jealous, and vice versa. They'll become a part of your life, good or bad, and if you're going to stay together, all these things need to be addressed. That's what this column is here for: to discuss why bands fight, why bands work or don't work, why bands succeed, and why bands break up. In almost every way, this is kind of a relationship column, to examine the fragile relationships that you have with your bandmates.

In the last issue, I had the opportunity to call myself out on my own entitled bullshit, and I needed to hear it. I was being an asshole and a bad bandmate, and that internal conversation was overdue. For the sake of my fragile ego, I'm glad that I was the one to deliver the news. It's hard to do that, come to your own conclusions and be the one to hold yourself accountable. I wasn't thinking or acting with the band's best interests in mind. Since then, I've been more aware of what our needs are

COLUMNS

and how I can contribute. I'd like to think that we each do, but I also just recently took a blow from a bandmate who made an executive decision about our best interests for us.

One of my bands has had an issue this summer with playing shows too often and not dedicating time to rehearse and regroup as a band. We're sitting on recordings and need to start thinking about the rollercoaster process of releasing the new album and the tour that will go with it, so we have a lot on our plate at the moment. We've had a problem with flaking each week (which I addressed last issue) and we're working on that, but even still, when we do get together the main focus is on whichever show is coming up that week. So the smaller issue takes our attention because it's the immediate issue, and the big issue gets comfortable on the back burner. We're all stressed about it, but we're all happy to hook up all of the touring bands that come through the city in the summer, so we've all come to terms with having to hold off on the new record process until later in the year. Or so I thought. We had a show last week, and one of our guitarists posted on his personal Instagram account to come through because this will be the last show that we'll be playing for the rest of the year. What? When did we decide this? *We* didn't, *he* did. And now it's out there in public and the rest of us are stuck with it.

I definitely didn't react to it that night because I know myself and I know that I needed to process something like that so I don't overreact. I was mad, for sure, that was clear. I was mad because he made a big decision, told everyone except us, and didn't give us the opportunity to weigh in. It was completely unfair and kind of humiliating. Friends were hitting me up asking what it was all about and were a little hurt that I didn't tell them that this was essentially our "going away (for now)" show. The fact that he posted it under the guise of trying to drum up some last minute hype for the show was insulting. No one believes that you'd wait until right when the first band is starting to drop a bombshell like that. It's not like people are going to change their mind at 10 pm, get dressed, and then come through. Most importantly, we got a flood of messages from all the hurt and confused touring bands that we'd been talking to. What a shitty way for them to find out that we're pulling out of the show that we're hooking them up with. On top of all that, the absolute worst part about what he did was that...he was right. He held an intervention for us without inviting us. We (especially he) had been realizing that we've been taking our focus off what's most important for us right now, and we need to reevaluate what our priorities are. He reevaluated them for us and ripped that band-aid off without including us.

So it needed to be done, right? True. If he had pulled us all aside right when we got off stage and told us then that he was putting his foot down, we probably would have agreed. Maybe at the time he was worried that he'd get push back and he wasn't willing to compromise, so he did what he had to do to make sure that trigger was pulled. I can see that. It's a shitty power move and I'm not ok with that, but a part of me is a bit relieved that we're now free to focus on the release and regroup as a band. I guess if he's in a position where there is absolutely no other conclusion that he's willing to accept, then the outcome has to be the same no matter what, right? If he had done the right thing and told us in a respectable way that he is essentially refusing to play shows until we release the new record, what else could we say? At the end of the day there's only one place that we'll end up, so the only thing that's lost is trust, even through he was acting in our best interest. So I guess I forgive him this one time.

Each month BAND DRAMA will either be reviewing a universal issue that all bands face, or I'll be reviewing one of your band's issues. If you'd like a fresh perspective, advice, or just to vent in general (anonymously or not), reach out to banddramamrr@gmail.com. I've been in a lot of bands for the past fourteen years, which means that I've been in a lot of bands that have ended or failed. I'd like to think that I've grown from each, learned from each, and taken the time to reflect on each failure or success. I'm also still learning and experiencing, and I always will be. So I want to share what I've learned, as well as learn from all y'all punks in bands too.

Women and butches

Since its publication, I have near-ceaselessly been thinking about the column I included in issue #424. In my column, I briefly discuss growing up in a deeply white supremacist family, recognizing the ways white supremacy has affected me and my family, personal small steps on combating white supremacy that I have taken myself, and recommendations for others on combating white supremacy. These topics are all subjects that require a lot of precision, time, and space (by which I mean a large amount of words) to deftly handle. However, my column, which was written and included last minute, is fraught with not just imprecise language, but also ideas that reinforce white supremacy and racism, and it should not have run as is. I hurt a number of people deeply with my column, which I am truly sorry for. I would like to thank the people who have called me in about my column to talk to me about the ways in which it is deeply problematic. I have much to both unlearn and learn about my role in white supremacy and I plan on focusing intently on that. So see ya for now, I won't be writing another column for a little while; I'll be working on educating myself instead.

—joan@maximumrocknroll.com

I'm very happy [worldwide] to report that I've had an overwhelmingly positive response to the idea of running some sort of punk gossip section in this magazine. Thank you to people who wrote in or talked to me in person about it. Like you, I would love to see this vision become a reality! I'm feeling a little hung up on the logistics moving forward... and something you should know about me is that I love logistics. It's why I got my position at *Maximum Rocknroll*. The only feasible way I can imagine feeling okay about publishing juice on other people's lives is if it was submitted with consent by the parties most affected by the story. Or I could ask permission to write about my friends' crushes, break-ups, secrets, etc., I guess. I don't know how *Gossip Girl* found the time.

It's been a busy month, though. Other projects that need organization have taken precedence. I'm excited to be organizing our punk prisoner pen pal project! (Someone suggest a name for it that doesn't involve so many words that start with the letter P.) *Maximum Rocknroll* has quite a list of subscribers who are incarcerated, and all of

our business with them is done via snail mail out of necessity. Many prisoners write in to us often, and honestly I usually don't have time or energy to respond to the majority of the letters. I mean, I'm also not a reliably responsive pen pal in general! Shout out to Dusty Rose in Minneapolis, who I've been meaning to write back for four months, and Diana in Boston who has written me twice since I last saw her a few months ago. I'm sorry! I recognize I'm not the best at it, and that's why I wrote to every incarcerated *MRR* subscriber last month and asked if they'd like penpal(s), and, if so, if it was OK for me to share their address with punks. So, if you're reading this and you're not in prison and you're looking to correspond with an incarcerated punk, email me! If you're reading this in prison and you or a peer is interested in writing to someone on the outside, write in to me and I'll delegate.

I'm writing this column at the very beginning of the National Prison Strike, which is scheduled to be happening from August 21 to September 9. Likely, when you're reading this, that time will have passed already. If not, and you're not sure what's going on, please check out the original press release on the Jailhouse Lawyers Speak Twitter (@JailLawSpeak) for a list of demands from prisoners, as well as suggestions for what we can do on the outside to help. Some of those suggestions include spreading awareness of the strike to all places of detention and checking in on strike conditions with local prisoners (email millionsforprisonersmarch@gmail.com to be connected with local chapters). My heart goes out to my friends, my family, and *MRR* readers who are currently incarcerated, and especially to those who are actively involved in their local strikes. We are alongside you in the fight to abolish the prison industrial complex!

Last month, my column was like the prologue to *Maximum Rocknroll* Addresses Its Institutional White Supremacy: The Series. More thanks to the people who took time to write in or talk to me about this massive subject. We continue to discuss internally about what foundational structures are currently in place to protect and uplift whiteness and strategize around what we can do as coordinators to reorganize. Unchecked white privilege has negatively affected every single collective (especially majority-white collectives) I've been a part of since I started organizing in high school, so this isn't a new experience. I'm sure it's not a new experience for anyone, unless you're white and you've been exclusively organizing / playing music / interacting with white people and no one anywhere along the way has pointed out anything weird about that. Every time this has come up around me, the resolutions feel a little more tangible and less daunting, but the [interpersonal and external] work is never-ending. This month I'd really like to hear from and talk to people who've dealt with assessing and restructuring collectives to combat and unlearn the ways white supremacy behaviors have shown up. Whether your strategies have disappointingly failed or they resulted in closer bonds and transformative growth, I'm interested!

Currently, we're trying to assess our current system of gathering content. As you know, we're a contribution-based magazine; we don't have a team of writers working for us, seeking out interviews. The culture in place now is that we encourage bands to have a friend interview them and submit it to us. If we really want to see something run in the magazine, we'll offer to do the interview ourselves to make sure it gets done. However, an issue we're seeing is that most of the content that gets submitted is majority white, cis-dude bands from the United States or Western Europe. Furthermore, they tend to be bands with members who've been in other well-known bands who have maybe had reviews or interviews in *MRR* before, so they already know how our process works for contributors. We're stuck in a content feedback loop! Why are those bands feeling the most comfortable submitting content to us? Why do they feel the most ready to be represented in *Maximum*?

A strategy we've been discussing at the compound has two prongs: the first is to do more interviews ourselves as coordinators, and the second is to encourage people internationally to regularly seek interviews for contribution to the magazine. I've been annoyingly vocal to my housemates about the first prong, because I feel strongly that if we're unsatisfied with how the content contributed poorly reflects the grander image of what's exciting about punk in 2018, then we should use the curatorial power we have to gather interviews ourselves. I'm excited about broadening our network of international shitworkers to gather content, too, but what feels tangible and immediate to me is hitting up bands I love and want to lend the *MRR* platform to and just conducting the interview myself. Both aspects feel (and are) important. What also feels important is your daily reminder from all of us at the compound: *MRR* is what all of us, shitworker and reader alike, make it to be! It's actually so easy to see your band represented in this magazine, and if you have questions, please don't hesitate to email or write in. We'll keep doing our best to make the submissions process clearer and easier to understand and continue to try to deconstruct the age-old reputation of this magazine being elitist and exclusive.

In other news, I'm having a blast paying attention to the distribution side of *Maximum* and cleaning the house and organizing systems and revamping website shit. I really want to talk about the big changes that are coming to our webstore, which has taken a lot of time doing computer back-end stuff with our web coordinator, Paul Curran. I'm not sure if we'll publish those changes before or after this column goes to print, so I'll stay quiet for now. It's probably not even exciting to anyone but me, Paul, Joan, and Miranda, but whatever. Slowly bringing the operations of *Maximum Rocknroll* into 2018 has produced a feeling of satisfaction relatable to watching an OxyClean commercial, so if you catch my drift then maybe it'd also be headline news to you that Paul built us a computer that can operate software with updates newer than 2011. Maybe if you also loved the TV show *Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners*, then you'd be pleased to know I found six ancient cans of Monster Energy Drink in the garage and threw them away (after offering them to my housemates, of course). These are the kinds of things that fall under the Distribution Coordinator job title, and I've never found a more perfect role for my love of organizing.

Unrelated: I found out recently that Paul was in CRIMPSHRINE and GO SAILOR?? I don't know why no one told me any sooner, but maybe that's for the best to avoid any fangirl tendency I might've exposed. I've finally started playing music here, which feels great! The very talented Kris Moya and Jordan Springman have been patient with me while I relearn how to play drums. I've hardly touched a drum stick since BOX FAN and DYKE DRAMA, and *wow* it is true that if you don't use it, you lose it. It's coming back with practice, though, and it's so much fun to play with Kris and Jordan. During this month, my band REXMANNINGDAY. is finally recording our first full-length album, which has been pretty difficult to finish writing since I moved out of Olympia (props to Sadie and Jimmy for being productive without me! Thank you!). We'll be recording it exactly a year after recording our demo with Joey at Left Field Studio, this time locking ourselves away for a whole week trying to get these new songs down.

It was that recording session a year ago that had all this stupid drama happening in the background, and the beginning of a social hell that would lead me to moving out of Olympia. I thought about writing about that experience in this column, since it's been a whole year since it all happened. Enough time has passed that I feel fine being public about how pissed I am that I was the recipient of so much girl hate and slut shaming within a supposedly radical punk scene. But I'll save it for the gossip column, whenever that starts happening. However, that experience is a good example of the kind of gossip I'm looking for: the behind-the-scenes drama of recording sessions, weird

inter-band love triangles / squares / pentagons, who made out with who on tour, when punks (me) unexpectedly fall in love with someone in another state (Ramy) and uproot their lives to follow a good feeling. Especially when people write songs about drama going on with someone else in a different band; an album gets a lot more interesting when you know the juice behind the lyrics. This shit makes punk interesting! If you agree, consider sending in your gossip, even if you need to use pen names.

I will leave you reminiscing about your own romantic drama, in hopes you feel inspiring to share it with me. As a recap, write in if you're interested in being involved with the prisoner pen pal project, if you'd like to share your experience about combating white supremacy in your collectives or cooperatives, or if you'd like to dish to my inbox ways that systems of oppression play into our love lives and ways that your band incorporated that drama into lyrics. Thank you!!

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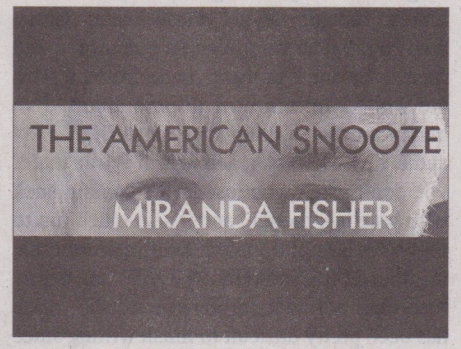

I've been thinking a lot lately about the idea that *MRR* is elitist in some way. I mean, it's something I've been thinking about for quite a while, but since Vicky wrote about it in her column last month I've been turning it over in my mind even more. The idea is pervasive, right? If it's not something that you, dear reader, have yourself thought, then I'm quite sure that it's something that you've heard someone else express. And it's obviously not limited to *MRR*—Biff's column earlier in this issue explores the idea of there being some sort of "class system" within punk. He concludes that there isn't (agreed!) and then ends by directly addressing anyone who considers themselves "a member of this Wall Street caliber top 1% of punk,"which is pretty funny. But I gotta go one step further and ask, does *anyone* consider themselves to be in the upper eschelon of punk?

All three of the current coordinators who live here at the *MRR* manse have expressed on multiple occasions how before we applied to be coordinators we worried that we weren't "punk enough." I think we all had different reasons for feeling that way, but the sentiment was the same; it wasn't that we doubted our abilities to run this magazine, but that we worried we somehow weren't cool enough to be a part of it.

It's something that I've heard multiple past coordinators express as well—people who I had thought of as some of the most knowledgeable, most popular, just plain *coolest* individuals in punk. There's something very reassuring about that for me personally, but it leaves me scratching my head a little bit too. If they're not the punk elite, then *who is?!*

It feels completely fucking absurd for me to even imply that someone might think of me as part of some group of elite punks. Even typing that sentence just now made me squirm. I grew up as (and remain, both inwardly and, I think, outwardly) a huge fucking nerd who nobody ever thought was cool. I feel the need to let everyone know that I *don't* think that anyone looks up to me and I'm *aware* that I'm not a member of any hypothetical punk elite, don't worry, I'm as self-loathing as you could possibly imagine!

That said, I also think it's really important to acknowledge the power that we hold as *MRR* coordinators. This magazine gets read by literally thousands of people around the world, and we are in charge of choosing what goes into it. That *is* power, and I think that we have to be conscious of that power that we hold so that we can use it responsibly.

If you're someone who thinks that *MRR* is elitist, we want to know why you think that. And we want to know what you think we can do better. There are definitely a lot of things that we know we need to work on, some of which Vicky touches on in her column, but frankly there's probably a ton of shit that we don't even realize that we're doing that's excluding people who should be in this magazine.

When I was eighteen, my band was briefly mentioned in a scene report in *MRR*. It wasn't a scene report on our town (there were like three bands there; the scene report would have been one sentence long) but on a city we'd gone through on tour. And it wasn't even a particularly positive mention! If I recall correctly, it explicitly said that some people hated us! But still, to me, I felt like I had "made it" in some way. I had been mentioned in *MRR*; there would forever be proof that I existed in the written history of punk.

Integral to that response was, of course, the assumption that I would never again be mentioned in *MRR*. Boy, was I wrong, huh? Here I am with my name all over every goddamn issue. But the thing is, I could have been in it more then, too. And maybe I should have been. A punk band comprised entirely of teenage girls from small-town Wisconsin who somehow got it together just enough to go on one (very poorly planned!) regional tour before breakng up to go to college is exactly the kind of thing I'd be thrilled to feature in the magazine now. There was absolutely no reason I should have felt like I had to be chosen or deemed worthy of being in the magazine.

Look, the fact is that we, like everybody else on earth, like to shit talk sometimes. I mean, a lot of the time. But that's the job of music criticism. Otherwise it's just music appreciation, and this is not a blow-off class you take in your senior year of high school, it's a magazine—one we care about deeply and want to make as good as possible. And maybe that's what leads to this accusation of elitism. But I truly believe that this magazine can both offer nuanced / informed / *hopefully funny?!* critiques of music and also be a welcoming / supportive / non-"elitist" resource.

Anyway, the point is that you're cool enough or punk enough or good enough to be in *MRR*, so please contribute, and not just because it makes our jobs easier.

***

Rejected column topics:

- 2,000-word rant about how coffee tastes bad and eveybody said I'd change my mind when I got older but *I have not changed my mind!!!*
- *MRR* Coordinators as *Sex and the City* Characters Even Though Yes We All Know the Show Is Terrible
- [Joan wouldn't let me mention this conspiracy theory that I wholeheartedly believe because she says it is "potentially libelous"]

***

This is the most earnest piece of writing I've done, I dunno, maybe *ever*, and I'm feeling very self-conscious about it, so for chrissakes please email me at miranda@maximumrocknroll.com and tell me how we can make the magazine better so I can feel like this column was worth it.

wimps

garbage people

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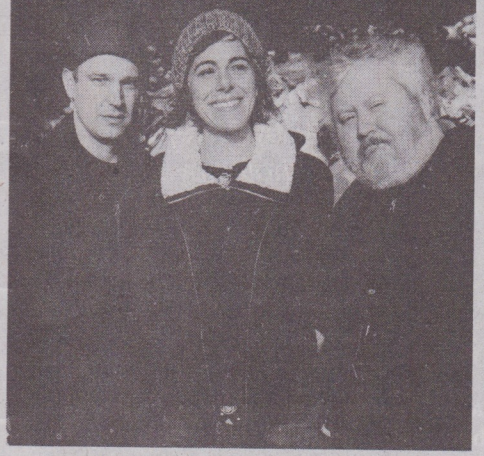

TO LIVE A LIE

SIX BREW BANTHA- Blight LP

Canadian grindcore vets have perfected their over-the-top brutal sound. Comes highly recommended and is one of TLAL's favorite grindcore recs.

HUMMINGBIRD OF DEATH - FORBIDDEN ∞ LP

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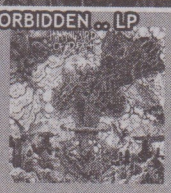

MARXBROS / TRAVØLTA - split LP

MxB is members of LARM & SEEIN' RED paired with C. Dodge from SPAZZ (holy crap!) and TRAV is ripping Belgian fast political hardcore. You Shouldn't miss this.

STILL HOT : SEX PRIS/HD - spl LP, WVRM LP, Nashgul LP, Oxidant 7", Burnout 7", Despise You /Coke Bust 7"

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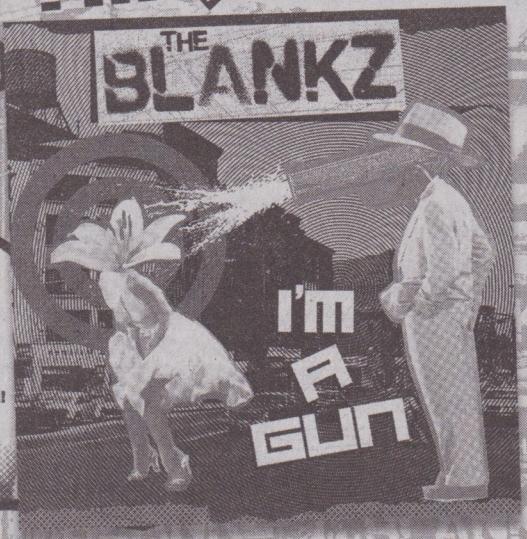

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VEUVE S.S.

By the time you read this interview, Veuve SS will no longer exist as a band. In fact, "band" status hasn't been true to what Veuve SS really was during those past few years, even before they were officially disbanded. Veuve SS's story has always been hazy, due to their own chaotic way of functioning. When MRR asked them to make this interview happen, I felt like I could try to ask the right questions and find ways of telling their story, especially when this very story is now posthumous. So, la Veuve is dead, long live la Veuve!

Intro and interview by Flo Spector. Photos by Hazam.

MRR: Your new LP, *Traitre à Tout*, is now out on Nerdcore Records. This was your last record before you called it quits. Is that fine with you to end with this specific record? Do you feel like you have accomplished what you've wanted to, or do you feel frustrated to stop now? Don't you find it ironic that people only start to find interest in your band outside of France after your breakup?

Cyprien (guitar): This is our last record and the one I'm the most pleased with. There are still things we could have done differently, but I'm proud of what we have achieved. We decided to end the band when Hugues left Lyon three years ago. At this time, Nerdcore proposed us to put out an LP, which is really rewarding and exciting, so we decided to give it a shot even if the band didn't really exist anymore. About the interest toward us, aside from *MRR* who asked for this very interview, I don't think that people are now more interested in us than before. Low rate interest, if you ask me.

Benjamin (bass): Personally, I'm frustrated precisely because I like this album and I would have like to know what could have been done after that. Veuve SS was the only band I play in that made music that I love and listen to. But it was too complicated keeping this band up. About the irony, I'm unfortunately not surprised anymore. It's best to accept not being too loved while you're an active punk-rock band...

Hugues (vocals): This record is like our Mater Dolorosa, a painful delivery and a beautiful death at the same time. I think I'm OK with stopping with this record. I would have liked to play those songs live, so there is still a frustration there, but isn't that what underlies everything that is hardcore or punk? This is OK with me. Do we really have a choice anyway? Will people become interested in us? I'm now sure that Veuve SS was a mixed bag of a band who didn't find an audience thanks to its "uneasy" side. Not arty enough, not punk enough, not hardcore enough, not metal enough, not powerviolence enough, not noise enough...I don't know if I'm missing something there but I feel like it's hard for the audience to find something in a band that always fall between two chairs.

MRR: You didn't have a steady drummer for quite some time. You were spread across the country and didn't often practice with a full lineup, but you still managed to write a full-length. How was it possible? Cyprien, I know that your interest in everything hardcore or punk is close to zero nowadays. Where did you find the motivation and inspiration to write this last record?

Cyprien: Those three years were really rough and demanding. Thanks to the constant motivation of Hugues and Benjamin, either for their management skills or for keeping the flame alive between us, this album is out. Without them, I know for certain that it would never see the light of day. I said it before, but thanks a lot, guys!

So, firstly, Benjamin wrote some songs on the record, so I'm not alone in this. As far as I'm concerned, it's true that I no longer go to DIY shows; I don't feel the same excitement that I used to feel, and I feel like I had cycled through all those things more than once. So I moved on and found interest in other kind of music that made me feel like an amazed kid who has everything to discover from it, things that I didn't feel anymore in the "scene" at the time. I think I like being departed into unknown territory, being ignorant and having to understand and learn everything—it's really stimulating. I still feel connected to all of this, though, because I owe a big part of who I am, and the way I envision the world around me, to punk rock. To be honest with you, if I didn't fall into all this, I don't even know what I could have done with my life.

Having said that, I still listen to punk rock and hardcore. I've always listened to a wide range of musical styles. Not going to shows or evolving in "the scene" doesn't change anything at all for me. I've always tried not to be influenced by bands that play the same kind of music that we played, even if one could find standards elements of the style in our music. I find it boring to emulate other bands' music—it makes your music sounds stale and bad. I like to go forward, to explore new territories, to think differently.

I often had this conversation with Benjamin about being a huge melodi-hardcore fan as a kid and trying to find melodies as good

as No Use For A Name. It's not really relevant in Veuve SS's sound, but it's a huge part of me, and even if those songs don't have any cheesy melodies, there is still a kind of melodic line within it. About songwriting, I find it funny to lay down some specific rules, like asking myself "what would Beethoven or Queen do if they wanted to make grindcore music?" Or I listen to a song that I like and go "argh, too bad they didn't do this or that, I've done that differently, that could have been perfect to my ears!" so I try and digress around the idea. What I also like to do is to picture a geometric form on my guitar neck, follow the scheme with chords, and see what happens. It's all-over experimentations, limitless, and at the end of the day, you figure out if it's good or bad to your ears. But definitely, I try to pick up ideas from different music outside of hardcore. Then, there is rehearsal, when everybody makes their own ideas from what I bring and starts to arrange songs.

Benjamin: Vincent was our longtime former drummer. By the way, it's Vincent and Cyprien who started the band. Then we had to find another drummer, and this was when I met Oli from Death To Pigs / Malaise, who I had a great relationship with and who's a really great drummer as well. He was down to do the record with us, but the deal was always clear from the start: we just record the album and then we kill the band and let it die. It was the chronicle of a death foretold. We didn't practice a lot, that's true, but still, we tried our best at it. I feel like you can hear the sense of urgency in some almost incomplete songs in the album. All in all, I'm the one who really wanted to put out this album. I want to put out as much music as I can, until I die. This is how it goes.

Hugues: Vincent, our former drummer, was also kinda involved in the making of the album at the beginning. Oli completed and recorded the songs, and most importantly gave us a huge breath of fresh air and made this record happen. Cyprien has amazed me once again with his songwriting skills. Being far removed from the other guys, I was floored when I discovered his first guitar takes. Of course, this hasn't been a walk in the park after I left for the other coast but Benjamin has been the keeper of all of our logistics and drive within the band. I always had this record in my mind and I remained committed to finishing it.

MRR: You had a first demo tape out in 2011, then, with a great regularity, like one record per year, you have put out vinyl records on the same Germany-based label Nerdcore Records. How did you get in contact with Nerdcore ?

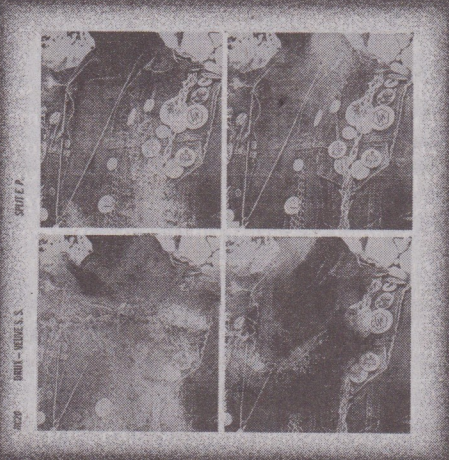
Hugues: Maik, who's behind Nerdcore Records, is a close friend of mine. I've known him for quite some time now, actually since we put out the Meurthe / Veuve SS split EP. I got in contact with him because I noticed his label and the special attention, in an almost handcrafted and meticulous way, he puts into his releases. We started to get along really well, and he gave us great support along all our releases. We wouldn't be able to put out as many records without him. He's really important for Veuve SS and especially for me. We still got a strong and lasting bond.

MRR: All of your releases were characterized by an extreme attention to the artwork. What kind of organization did you have to create your artwork? You are all involved, as jobs or hobbies, in graphic design / cut and paste art / lettering. How did you manage to share the task?

Cyprien: We always tried something new with each of our releases. If you choose to put out something in the real world, you have to make it interesting. That would be stupid to rush the artwork when you put out a vinyl record in 2018. You have to use the object to tell a story and to do it well; otherwise, just put it out on MP3. This is an extra place for you to express beyond music. At the very beginning, we shared our task, but since then, it's Hugues who ended making everything. It made for a much better coherence between all our releases.

Benjamin: I didn't do anything. *[laughter]* Aside from asking that not too many people be involved into our artwork, I just chilled. I don't like collaborative effort for artwork, it has to be a single person's approach.

Hugues: We were into the idea of giving a holistic vibe surrounding the band, that the artwork was an extension of what the music conveys; that Veuve SS is a coherent and concordant whole. To take the whole idea through the different sides, literally and figuratively speaking. It's indeed an extra space, so why do without it? For the demo tape, Cyprien and I did a four-handed effort, then for the next artwork, we split the task, even if I ended up doing almost every other one on my own. Besides the lyrics, I wanted to give the band's vibe through the artwork by including those personal elements like that.



MRR: I've got this ongoing debate with some of you, about those really classy and nice artworks that sometimes hide a musically weak record or an obvious lack of content. What's the more important for you? The artwork or the songs? Could the artwork take precedence over the musical aspect? A great artwork couldn't be as good as a great riff, can we all agree on that?

Cyprien: We were often criticized for being too arty blah, blah, blah. I don't agree with that. Like we said before, if you choose to craft a physical object to go with your music, it's better to do it carefully. Beyond that, we are a band, not a graphic designer crew, so it's clear that it's basically a musical thing first and foremost. But we took the opportunity to put out something tangible, so we tried to put all of our thoughts into it, to have something meaningful to the overall statements, to give a visual guidance throughout our music. But there is no doubt for us that everything that matters are the songs. It's not possible to take those two elements apart, but when you talk about a band, music is number one. You're right, there are artworks that are so much better than the music they convey, but I hope that this is not the case for us. In any case, our stand has always been that the artwork should help the music, and not the other way around.

Benjamin: Of course, music is the most important!!! But great artwork is obviously a bonus. Not too shabby lyrics are important too. But the music is the true purpose of a record! It has to say everything...

Hugues: Cover art could bring someone to music. It doesn't bother me at all. I don't know if an artwork can take precedence over the musical aspect of a band, in that I certainly don't want to listen to a record with a great artwork if it musically stinks. I'm aware of what artwork could bring, though. It strengthens the overall vibe of a band. I know really few bands that don't care about the visual aspect of their music, and this is even truer in hardcore and punk. This is a whole thing, like the way the band looks, the cover art and the lyrics. We as a band have the opportunity to explore those aspects because Nerdcore gives us a lot of freedom by giving us all the resources we wanted for our releases. In 2018, in a time of everything being dematerialized, that would be so dumb to prevent you from doing things the right way, to create a beautiful object to go along with the song. A riff is still a riff when you listen to it; cover art is always there when you listen to those riffs. This raises questions about the overall object, the physicality and archiving aspect of music in our binary code's time.

MRR: Hugues, let's talk about your lyrics. The nihilism and darkness, is it a cliché of this kind of hardcore, or do you feel like it's in your nature and you bring something new to the table? You've often cited French authors and artists, whether in your records booklet or in your graphic zines that you distributed at your shows some years ago. What are the most influential authors for your lyrics?

Hugues: It's a cliché, for sure, in all the feelings that this musical style tries to convey. I would never have envisioned writing positive things on those kinds of instrumentals. It could have been an interesting opposite way to elaborate lyrics around well-being and zen attitude in a stressful and frustrated environment, but Veuve SS was above all an outlet for something visceral and uncool. A self-exposure. And to say it all, I'm sure that everyone who found interest in a "deviant" subculture, or in punk for instance, has a really fucked up side. You don't randomly end up here. It's a catalyst for uneasiness. From teenage rebellion to reconsideration of our occidental societies, everything is built on a fucked up base. It's certainly over-simplistic and you could have a lot of different theory around it, but we are all broadly fucked up. So yeah, I'm part of this. 'm bursting out my feelings. I do not feel like I'm nihilistic. I'm feeling dark by imperative, but not the imperative given by punk; it's more about what's tearing me inside. I wanted to be cool, but I failed. I'm fucked up, and that's what everything this band provides.

These are also things that I found in my reading. Pasolini was a huge click for me, especially his personal diary and poetry. He is radically prophetic and clairvoyant. He felt his time like no one else did. But he was also a life lover; he was rooted into this thirst of survival. Céline was also a huge step for me, especially his works around words, like a lot of French hip hop artists as well, who make some crazy shit. I'm marked by this as well. To make words bang. I find the French language to be really efficient when you got all the different layers of meanings. But I'm not sure I'm ever strongly influenced by authors. I try to convey what goes through me with the most spontaneity. I have notebooks with ideas and lyric snippets. I try to build around this. What I have done didn't bring anything new to the table, but it has always been done with the crudest spontaneity.

MRR: You didn't play live much. Your shows were rare, and the town you were living in was (and still is) not a hardcore town. How was your audience's reaction in Lyon or in France? You only did one European tour during your seven years of existence. It's not much. In hindsight, did you consider Veuve SS only a recording band, or was the live experience important to you as well?

Cyprien: People weren't really going nuts at our shows. Now I understand that we played difficult music, so we get what we deserved. We emptied a lot of venues! About the second part of the

question, I'm sure we all have a different opinion, but as far as I'm concerned, I really enjoyed writing songs and recording them compared to played them at shows. We didn't play a music that was really "show-oriented." We didn't have a lot of goodness and optimism to share with our audience, so it ultimately didn't end up well.

Benjamin: For me, it fairly soon became apparent that La Veuve wouldn't play live so much. It was complicated right away from the start. That was OK with me because I played in other bands that could provide me with shows so I wasn't frustrated. For me, Veuve SS was only a recording band. We did some great live though, like when Hugues wants to provoke the audience, push people around, provoke them...fuck people up! One that strike me the most was what Hugues told me after a one specific really intense show we had: "Damn, I got punch in the fucking face...I didn't even know what to do about that." Hugues and Cyprien were really good on stage. And yes, it's true, Lyon is not a hardcore-oriented city, so there were criticisms about us that saddened me a bit at the time even if I can find it almost justified now. People must think that we were a bunch of opportunists jumping on the trendwagon. This is, for m,e the only music I can do and that I like to do as well, so it hurt me to hear those criticisms. No one is a prophet in his own land...

Hugues: I didn't care about audience reactions. In our town, the fact that people knew us outside of the stage skewed their expectations. For me, a hardcore show is violent and unpredictable. I really wanted to convey something more than a "stage performance." This music is basically uncool, so I don't know why I had to be cool during our shows. Actually, I wanted to have a reaction from the audience. But punk is so codified that it has to be a "show." I'm the one who's all pissed off in the front. I thought that people would fight back for what I did to them. By default, we got a lot more recording stuff than shows, but I liked to play shows thanks to the waiting aspect, the urge to get going, not just playing the songs but living them a little, letting out the remaining shit.

MRR: It's achievements time! How do you see the evolution of La Veuve since her birth to her death? What's remaining?

Cyprien: All that remains for me is a long and great experience. Seven years is a long time for a punk rock band. Also friends (we didn't know each other before starting this band). I learned to play guitar thanks to this band as well. We left with a few records under our sleeves, our (good or bad) cornerstone to Lyon's Hardcore. Soundwise, there was an evolution. We all started as rookies on our instruments, and then, as time passed, the music we did became more and more close to what we pictured in our head. What we wanted never really changed from the demo to the last LP, though.

Benjamin: To be honest, it was not easy at all. Rehearsals, for instance, were really tough because of a lot of tension and violence between some band members, tension that you can hear in our songs. To understand that while living it was the most important thing I learned about music. I also learned to play guitar by spying on Cyprien and to write lyrics by spying on Hugues as well. That and some friendships, that's what remains of La Veuve.

Hugues: This band left a huge mark on me. On the one hand, I never saw myself so forefront in a band (it was easy to hide behind a drum kit, where I was always been before this band). On the other hand, I found this whole experience really cathartic. This was also the music I listen to, so that was always a pleasure to play with Veuve SS. I learned about myself and tried to improve, both musically and in my relationship with the other three guys. My friends. We stayed coherent throughout our choices and our course from the beginning till the end of the band.

MRR: La Veuve is dead; let us know about your current projects. New bands, new labels, scrapbooking, macramé? Contact for hate mails or love letters ?

Cyprien: I got a synth / pop / new wave / electro band called La Boum, we probably will have some shows in 2018. I keep drawing, running in the mountains, discovering things...just living my life, basically. And maybe playing in a hardcore band, who knows? You can personally write me at xapollo11x@gmail.com, and for the band at veuves@gmail.com. We still check the inbox from time to time.

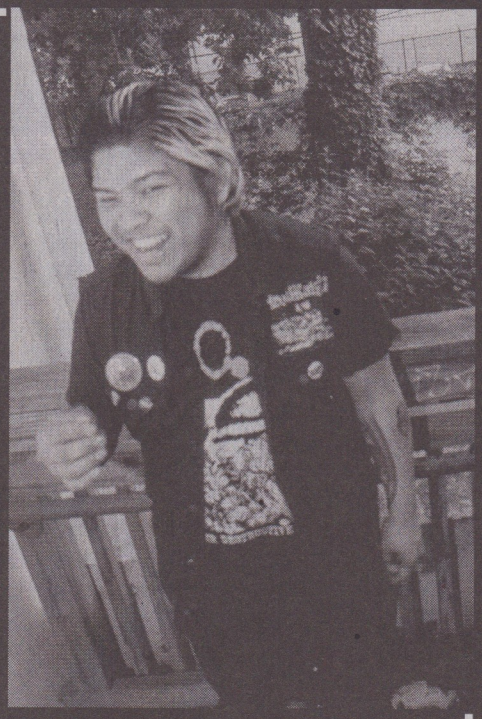
Benjamin: I play in Ayatollah, a doom band with rhythm box. I also play in La Hess, a hardcore band, and in Commando, a hardcore punk band too. I make cut and paste artwork for friends from time to time, some posters for shows and records cover. And you can't contact me at all. Thanks *MRR* for the interest, and thanks Flo a million times for the interview !

Hugues: After the end of Veuve SS, I started a new project called Âge Noir, a noisy hardcore one-man band. There is a tape EP on Nerdcore. Another EP is in progress, but it will be slightly different from the other one. I started another noise punk band on drums called Dewaere (soundcloud.com/dewaereband). An LP is in the works. I still make artwork. You can check my website at huguesxpzzl.tumblr.com and you can contact me here: hugues@puzzle-records.com. Thank you, Flo.

MIGRA PUNK FEST

June 30, NYC

Photos by Antonio Rodriguez (AR) and Brian Baganza (BB)



An Interview with Migra Punk Fest Organizer AJ Santos by Antonio Rodriguez

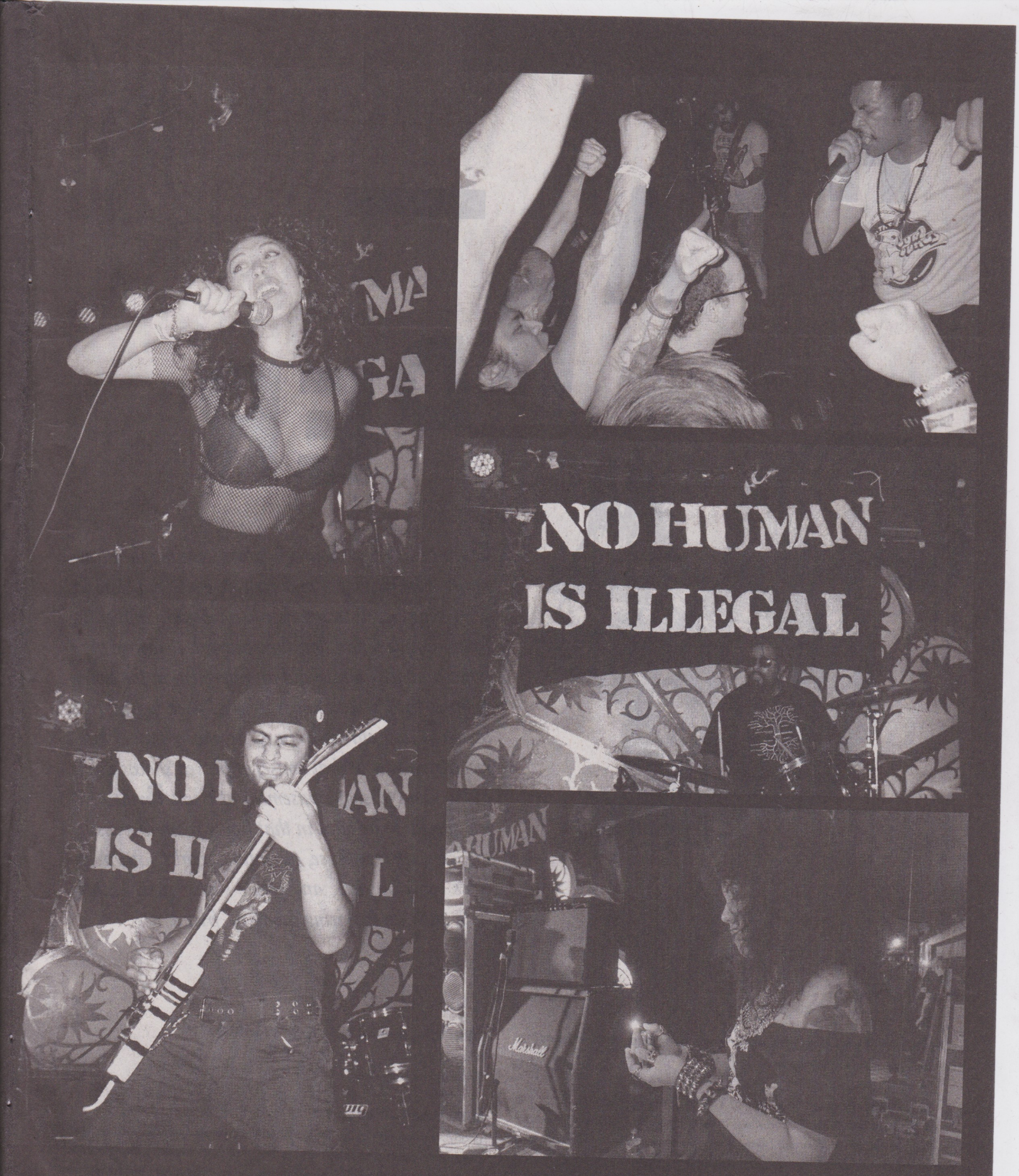
MRR: Can I get a little bit about what you do as an artist?
I play in bands called Namatay Sa Ingay, Material Support, and a very recently formed one called Sbagliata. As a Filipino immigrant worker, I am also active in the community and a member of organizations NYCHRP (New York Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines), Migrante NY and BAYAN USA.

MRR: What is Migra Punk Fest?
Migra Punk fest is an annual festival that is being held in New York City. It features punk bands with immigrant members singing in different languages other than English.

MRR: What is your connection to Migra Punk Fest?
I am one of the main organizers of the fest aside from my bandmates Jackie, Miles, Simon, Brian, and Gary. Even though I share ideas and make sure the fest runs smoothly, all decisions are made collectively.

MRR: What was behind the creation of Migra Punk Fest?
It all started last year when a Filipino Bay Area thrash band called Aninoko told me that they want to play here in NYC. Our friend Aldo organized the Latino Punk fest every year here, and we were thinking the same thing and had the idea of creating a Latino-Filipino punk fest, but I thought it would be better to just make it more inclusive and just do an Immigrant punk fest instead.

MRR: Is Migra Punk Fest something that you plan on continuing in the future?
We had a very positive feedback this year, and we were able to donate a good amount of money to organizations that help and fight for immigrants, especially undocumented ones, so we would probably be doing this every year now. Thank you for everything, and we are hoping you support this cause every year...



From left to right clockwise:

AJ Santos (AR), S.P.I.C. (BB), Haircut (BB), Dusters (BB), Y Que (BB), Olor a Muerte (AR), Bruja (BB), Maduros (AR)

HOARDER

Interview and introduction by Jefferson Doyle
Photos provided by the Band

Olympia, WA's Hoarder plays unique hardcore punk. The music is dark, eerie, urgent, and chaotic. The songs are strange jewels: vibrant, authentic, wild, complex, and somehow playful. I crashed their band practice and we did an interview in the living room at the Punkall house where I used to live, and where Dylan currently lives. So many bands have recorded music at that house, or played shows in the living room or soggy basement at Punk Brunch. It felt special to be back in that living room discussing art, creative resistance, parenting, work, patriarchy, class consciousness, and white supremacist culture with such an inspiring group of friends.

MRR: Will you describe where we are, and who is here?

Ben: We are in Dylan's house.

Tiffany: Dyliando.

Ben: Dyliando's house in Olympia, WA on unceded Nisqually land. I'm sitting here with Camille who plays bass in Hoarder, Dylan from Hoarder that plays drums in Hoarder, Tiffany from Hoarder who sings in Hoarder, and myself, Ben from Hoarder who plays guitar in Hoarder.

Tiffany: Maybe you could set the scene a little bit more, Ben.

Ben: Yeah, there's some mood lighting, everyone's got their own bubbly waters.

MRR: Who named the song "Worthless"?

Tiffany: I did.

Dylan: Tiffany names 'em all.

MRR: What's it about?

Tiffany: The first part of the song is about incarcerated people, mostly about loving incarcerated people, and the fact that fundamentally their rights to choose anything about their lives are taken away from them, including their rights to live or die the way they want to, and their rights to reproduce if they want to. Then the song switches to generally feeling worthless in the world

based on who you are. It's a pretty heavy song!

MRR: What experience do you have with incarceration?

Tiffany: The majority of my immediate family members have been incarcerated or are currently incarcerated. I grew up with both my parents in prison. My mom was sterilized when she was in prison. My pregnant sister is currently facing jail time. It's just been on my mind a lot recently and something I grew up thinking a lot about.

MRR: When was your mom sterilized in prison?

Tiffany: When I was 16. I'm 31 now. It wasn't necessarily forced, but because of the crimes she was arrested for, it was pushed on her, and heavily suggested that she get sterilized. She was incarcerated a lot for drug-related things and prostitution. It wasn't something I found on until later in life, then in school we were talking a lot about reproductive justice but not incarcerated people's choices, and I got really upset that wasn't being brought to the table. It's just easy to negate incarcerated folks, and that's what inspired the song actually.

Tiffany: I've wanted to be the front-person of a band since I was thirteen. I never played music and all my friends did and I thought, "It's too late for me to try to catch up." I ran into Dylan at a friend's kid's birthday party and he was like "I'm in this new band and we're looking for a singer. Wanna try out?" So I did some really embarrassing things in my living room to prepare for it.

MRR: What did you do?

Tiffany: I made sure no one was home and I put on a record of a friend's band...*[Laughter]*

MRR: What band?

Tiffany: Punch. And I put it on in the room next to me so I could just hear the music part and not be influenced by the singing style, then I sang my own words to it and recorded it on my iPhone. I watched myself doing it, and was like "This fucking sucks."

MRR: Do y'all feel like Hoarder is a tool, how is it a tool for ideas?

Tiffany: For me personally, having done a lot of activist shit earlier in my life and not doing that stuff for a long time, it's nice to have a way to talk about the political and social things that are important to me in a different space.

Ben: It's cathartic. I've played in a lot of different kinds of bands that haven't been as good for my mental wellbeing as much as Hoarder has.

Dylan: It's really nice for me to get back to playing hardcore punk. I've been pretty busy with a lot of different styles of music for the last decade, so it's been really nice to play punk and go fast.

Camille: It feels good to be in a band with badass people who are really smart. Playing bass is really fun for me. Also it's really badass to be in a band with Tiffany.

Ben: This is Tiffany's first ever band, and she's so good at it.

Camille: It's cool to be in a band where I'm proud of all the things in the band! I'm stoked about every part of this band. I don't wish anything was different. It's cool to have someone singing that's representing. Not that I can totally relate 100%, but I can be like, "Yes, I fuckin' feel that!" Ya know? It's kinda rare.

MRR: It's a success! So Tiffany, this is your first band, has this been something you've wanted to do? Why haven't you until now?

MRR: You took a video of yourself doing that?

Tiffany: *[Laughter]* Yeah, this is how I prepared for my try-out.

Ben: Your try-out?

Camille: Your audition.

Tiffany: Yeah, it was great 'cause I laughed at myself a bunch and was like "Fuck you man, just fuckin' do it." And it was hilarous and embarrasing. I probably still have the video on my phone. *[Laughter]*

MRR: I feel like the response to Hoarder has been energetic and positive. People who like your band are all over the age and identity spectrum. Why is this?

Dylan: We try to play a lot of all ages shows 'cause bars are boring.

Camille: I'm not in the hardcore scene and we only play with the not-bro version of hardcore. So it's really cool and my perspective is weird 'cause I'm like, "The hardcore scene in Olympia is really cool and radical," but that's not necessarily true or representative entirely.

Tiffany: I think we're a fun band. There could be a 26-second-long song and there are kids that are like, "Yeah! Give it to me heavy and fast!" and that's so chill and great, and there have been times when people come up and are like, "Hey I heard what you were saying in that song and that resonated with me." But in general I think the connector is fun.

Ben: Yeah, I think we are fun, too. One time someone came up after a set and asked me what timing one of the heavy slow parts was in, like "Was that in 12/8?" and I was like "what?" and they were like, "12/8? The time signature." And I was like, "I don't know what you are saying to me." But if people are into it, cool. ***[Laughter]***

MRR : Who comes up to you and says that your words resonate with them?

Tiffany: Mostly female identified people and generally younger 20s or something. It's nice to talk to people who want to talk about lyrics and performance, and it's especially nice when it's other female identified people. Just to have that space, like they are actually connecting to the music.

MRR: Is Hoarder a feminist band?

Tiffany: Yeah. But more than just that. Feminism can be affirming of a binary right, so you don't wanna get stuck in that binary thinking. But Hoarder is, from my perspective, inclusive of people across a whole spectrum of identities. Not just specific to a feminist identity. I personally have a lot of feminist ideology or something but it doesn't end there.

Ben: As a band, we try to play shows that are inclusive and welcoming to people of all genders, and ages, and social classes, and races. In Olympia we have a scene that's very queer with lots of women, but that's not the norm everywhere, so we want to support this scene, and support the idea that everybody can come and feel safe and welcome and not out of place.

MRR: Because of patriarchy being absolutely everywhere, including this interview for example, like, I am a man conducting this interview, which in itself is affecting what you all choose to say in some way...

Tiffany: Yes. Truly.

Camille: Yes.

MRR: I was thinking about this, and within your band, how does patriarchy manifest itself and how do you deal with it as a group?

Tiffany: Great question.

Dylan: Me and Ben write like 98% of the music.

Ben: Yeah, what you're hearing sonically is just like two white dudes being like "jud jed jud jud jud" so you know, that's not so exciting. [Laughter]

Camille: Gotta put a little twist on it! I've never been in a band with dudes like this one. One day, while Ben was playing the guitar really loud, lotsa notes, and I'm like "Hello? Hello!" like I usually am, Dylan was like, "Hey, Camille is trying to say something." It was a real revolutionary moment in my life that had literally never happened. It felt so good. It's also cool that Dylan does a lot of the logistical and organization stuff. Being in bands on tour, people take on certain roles, and a lot of times I've taken on a classic mom style role, like, "OK everyone, clean up yer shit, let's organize the thing..."

Ben: I'm definitely guilty of the dude noodle.

MRR: Can you describe what that is?

Ben: Fuckin', like at practice, in between songs, when we are tuning, or just seeing what the next song is, I start playing some Led Zeppelin riff from sixth grade or something...

Tiffany: Blink-182, Jimmy Eat World.

Camille: Lit.

Dylan: When we are focusing on practice and trying to move forward, Ben is playing a Guns N' Roses riff. ***[Laughter]***

Tiffany: Over and over. It's beautiful, though.

MRR: What Guns N' Roses riff?

Camille and Tiffany ***[in unison]*** : "Sweet Child O' Mine." ***[Laughter]***

Ben: Is there another Guns N' Roses song?

Tiffany: I agree with you on that one, I do like "Welcome to the Jungle" too.

Camille: On a scale of one to ten, I don't know a number for the heavy duty patriarchy involved that I'm experiencing in this band, but it's real low comparatively for me!

Tiffany: I have nothing to compare it to as it's my first band, but I have experienced a lot of the effects of patriarchy in life. I enjoy having complete creative control over the lyric writing. It's nice that all my bandmates are down with the things I wanna talk about, and support me.

MRR: Julia at MRR was curious if that song "Mindfulness" is about a terrible hippie?

Tiffany: Not specifically. ***[Laughter]***

Ben: You mean our Alice in Chains song?

Tiffany: There are nods to terrible hippies in the song "Ex-B," which is about terrible dudes. "Mindfulness" is mostly about all the weird shit people said to me since becoming a parent. How your identity changes even if you don't feel

like your identity changes that much, the way people perceive you changes. At least initially. And especially being a non-traditional parent or whatever, feeling judgement in certain circles or something. Just confronting that shit.

MRR: What ways are you a non-traditional parent? Is the lyric "new life" about your daughter?

Tiffany: Yeah, June's my daughter, she is three and a half. Hanging with a bunch of punks, especially primitivist types a couple years ago, people were really not down with having kids. "Ugh, you're a breeder," like "Why would you do that? What about population?" All these things, which are very valid. "Why would you have a kid?" It's a valid question like, "Why would you bring a new life into this world that is so fucked up?" People forget it's not always a political question, and if we want to talk about reproductive autonomy it's giving every person the right to choose whether they want to have a kid or not. Obviously I'm concerned about population control, the environment, the world, but people sometimes let their beliefs about that kind of shit cloud an individual's right to choose whether or not they want to reproduce. I was often like, "That's my choice. It's not your concern." I'm very happy I have a kid.

MRR: In what ways has your kid changed your life?

Tiffany: I generally don't sleep for more than three hours at a time. [Laughter] That's such a heavy question. I'd say the biggest ways have been learning the things about myself that really need attention. You can think that you are a patient person, then you have a kid and then you're like, "Oh fuck, I'm not." On the day to day, like, I have a best friend who I just really enjoy being around and she brings me a lot of joy. And there is a weird thing like, if you had a fucked up childhood and you have a kid you are like, "I have a chance to do right by a kid." It's scary and exciting, a beautiful challenge. She's a good adventure buddy. Very adaptable. ***[Laughter]***

MRR: In a capitalist society, how do you balance making a living and feeling fulfilled in your lives? How does working relate to being in a band?

Tiffany: I'm personally a baker, so I just don't sleep sometimes when we play shows. I play a show, then go to work at two in the morning, and that's just part of my life sometimes. It's cool. I like being a baker, get hella free croissants for everyone!

Camille: I feel like I would prefer not to be a line cook til the day I die. I'm gonna try to work out a plan so that happens. 'Cause it's cool to be happy beyond like, "Thank god I have this job." I've made so many concessions in my life, and I've gotten to a point where I've accepted this idea that "this is my skill set, this is what I can do, and this is the best I can do." And it really fuckin sucks to realize that, and to know that you actually can do more. Playing in bands and playing music offers an avenue to express myself.

Tiffany: They say bakers don't last past 45, so I'm looking at 15 more years of this.

Ben: 14 really.

Tiffany: OK, thank you.

Ben: It's definitely hard to find fulfillment in life. ***[Laughter]*** I moved to Olympia for that reason 'cause I was living previously in Asheville, which I loved.

Tiffany: What's up Asheville!

Ben: I was working dead end jobs and decided to save up money and go to graduate school so I'll feel more fulfilled. And that's what I'm doing now, and I don't feel more fulfilled. I'm coming to a realization that fulfillment doesn't come from work or your job. I don't think people should be defined by their work, unless they are a cop or something. [Laughter] People are so much more than what they do to pay rent.

Tiffany: Sometimes, though, you can't help but identify your personhood with your job. In some positions, there is this weird sense of identity with your job when you are investing so much of your body in it. Like, you are standing there physically tired. I have a weird sense of pride in having a craft. I don't find fulfillment, but it's part of my identity. Even if I don't want it to be.

Camille: Also, it sucks to put so much of your energy and time into a skill and then to not take pride in it... that's the worst thing. With a line cook job, it's so hard and all consuming of my energy and mental capacity. I'm a different person when I'm doing this job. I'm a good cook, I can cook Dylan's five over-easy eggs in one pan no problem. I feel proud as fuck to be able to do that. It's 'cause I've been doing it for so fucking long, and that's sad, so I gotta take a little bit of pride in it or else everything is wasted. Ya know?

Dylan: I try not to identify with my work, which is very popular. It's something I do, It's not who I am.

Tiffany: Your work is very popular? ***[Laughter]***

Dylan: It's very popular at my work to identify as an employee.

MRR: Where do you work, Dylan?

Dylan: I work at Old School Pizza. It's very popular amongst people there to highly identify as an employee of that place and for it to truly be a part of their identity. But it's just something I do. I also decommission diesel tanks with my family. And again, that's just something I do, it's not who I am.

MRR: Decommissioning diesel tanks doesn't necessarily sound like a white collar family history.

Dylan: No, it doesn't seem like that. ***[Laughter]***

MRR: And Tiffany, both your parents were incarcerated? And Camille, you were raised by a single mother. How does class play into your identity as a band?

Tiffany: It's something I think about all the time. It's just part of who I am. It's who I am because of where I came from and how I've chosen to think about it. But it's not something that I'm ruminating on. Class issues are so important, but they aren't the most important. It's all about the intersectionality of everything. But I do have a certain degree of class consciousness in lyric writing 'cause it is very important to me. It's part of my identity, it just is, and it will be forever.

Dylan: I definitely identify as a working class person and coming from a background of that sort. I recognize that I am judgmental based off of that history. Like if you are a yuppie, I'm just gonna identify you as a yuppie and I'm gonna try to see what's beyond that... but I can't guarantee that it's gonna work. [Laughter]

Tiffany: I definitely get called out by people in my life for being like, "Oh you just don't like that person 'cause they're rich." ***[Laughter]***

Camille: True!

Dylan: I'm not gonna straight up dislike somebody because of that, but I recognize that my judgment is augmented by my background. Other people's behaviour and judgment is gonna be augmented by their background, and that sometimes has negative effects, sometimes positive.

Ben: I think a lot of people in punk try to play down their class privilege. As somebody who grew up solidly middle class, my experience is different than people that grew up poor and working class, and that's something I try to be cognizant of. I didn't grow up rich, and so I kinda have a disdain for people that did. But I didn't grow up poor and I have on a Patagonia jacket. ***[Laughter]***

Dylan: Will you delete that? No one in Hoarder wears Patagonia jackets that are golden and puffy.

Ben: I look like a golden smoothy right now, and I'm a vegan straightedge dude who... Ya know what I mean? I have class privilege. [Laughter] I have a different class background then the rest of the band, that's why I don't write the lyrics. ***[Laughter]***

MRR: Do you feel seen and accepted by your bandmates?

Ben: Yes, absolutely. I wouldn't talk openly if I felt like they wouldn't be. We are all friends. t the end of the day, we are in a band, and if we aren't in a band we are still friends.

Tiffany: We're still texting about Lara Bars.

Camille: I got fifteen text messages the other day, just from the band...

Dylan: Talking about what's on sale at Grocery Outlet.

Tiffany: Hot deals at the Grocery Outlet, come and get 'em!

MRR: When I was making a playlist for the MRR radio show, I texted Tiffany about what Hoarder song to play, and you said "Lighthouse" and that this song was about trying really hard and fucking up but persisting because you believe in yourself. What are your ideas on perfectionism? Does it affect your life? Within punk, anarchism, activism, how is perfectionism involved?

Camille: Damn.

Dylan: I'm very often affected by this idea when it comes to music. No matter what show we play or recording we do, or any project that I'm involved with, people will be like, "Wow that was great! How do you feel?" and I'm like, "Well I fucked up in these ways, it could have been better." It's a thing I take away from my dad. It's this shitty spot to be 'cause you are never content with what's going on, because you're obsessed with perfectionism. And it sucks.

MRR: If that came from your dad, do you relate perfectionism with patriarchy?

Dylan: Yeah, that would definitely have a lot to do with patriarchy. He learned it from somewhere, and I'm pretty damn sure it was his dad. Whenever I'm presenting something to him, he will always feel that it could've been better, which overshadows any feelings of accomplishment.

Tiffany: I have the opposite feeling about perfectionism. Like, I'm not a good singer. I'm just not. I'm doing it the best that I can, or doing it how it feels best to me. Not everything is gonna sound good, or look good, or feel good, but it doesn't make it any less valid! That's what I'm going off of, 'cause if I starting picking it apart and am like, "this sounds quite horrible," then I'll never do it again, ya know? Makes Dylan a pretty tight drummer though.

Dylan: Could be tighter.

Ben: I can't really listen to any recording I've been on 'cause I hear mistakes, weird timing, or I hit the wrong note, or my guitar sounds like a tin can in a rainstorm.

Camille: "White Supremacy Culture" is a piece written by Tema Okun, y'all know about this? In it, she names perfectionism as one of the symptoms of living in a white supremacist culture. I learned how to play violin as an eight year old. As I got older, I was doing auditions to get into the youth symphony and orchestra where you are playing a piece of music by yourself in front of six adult music professionals and they decide what seat to put you in. If you couldn't afford music lessons, you were at the back, and it's very much about perfectionism. I've stopped caring about how perfect shit is. Just learning to accept that this is the best I can do right now and moving on. It's tight to get to a point where I feel good about not being perfect. Perfectionism is a way to mentally destroy yourself because of the culture we live in. It's a real thing and it's just you. There is not a group of old ladies judging you on every single wrong note on your violin and telling you where you can sit in the orchestra based on this one thing you did. In a band like Hoarder, the details, the perfectionism doesn't really matter. It feels really good for me that I have let go and relinquished control within myself of having to have everything perfect.

MRR: In what ways is Hoarder / making music / making art a meaningful thing to do against totalitarianism or fascism or social control? Do you feel that what you are doing is important? In what ways?

Dylan: I'm not always convinced we are.

Ben: If someone finds worth in our music and it makes them feel like they have worth, I think that active community building is the enemy of fascism. It's cliché, but as long as we stand up for each other, we'll always have a viable weapon against the state.

Tiffany: This is a very important question!

Dylan: The spread of ideas within the punk or underground music community can be a positive thing, particularly to people who have access to music from around the world but don't have access to a radical community within their physical community.

Ben: Punk is where I discovered anti-fascist politics, and that there was even such a thing. I grew up in a rural area where there wasn't antifa organizing that I was aware of. Punk was how I started reading Howard Zinn books.

Tiffany: Punk is the Great Refusal, man. It's part of the whole thing, like if you really care...this is gonna sound like bullshit...but it's important and I get pissed when other 30 year olds mock me for still caring about punk, but it's important because it's a response to a culture that is culture death. It's a response to something that is destructive in so many ways. And it's not just capitalism or totalitarianism or fascism or democracy even whatever, its refusing to accept "this is the way your life should go these are the things you should want and need and be happy with" Punk is part of the great refusal to all that, and the great refusal is huge, and punk is important forever. I probably sound really naïve and dumb, but that's how I actually feel. Art and liberation are tied together very heavily, especially in response to capitalism and if you can make art that liberates you from capitalism for a minute, then you're creating space for further expansion of that.

Camille: Community building. Inclusiveness. Boom!

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DON'T ASK

Don't Ask has been inspiring big feelings and tender mosh pits for punks in Oakland and beyond since 2016 with melodic, relatable punk songs descending from the Southeastern US's Region Rock legacy. In the cozy security of their van, the band opens up about connection and community, the tricky task of defining "pop punk," and the unusual workings of Deimos Records.

Interview by Heather Blotto.
Photos provided by the band.

MRR: When did Don't Ask get started?
Lourdes: Two years ago.
Jesska: Me and Lourdes play in another band called Mabs, and then when our guitar player Caitlin went out of town, Ian and I were gonna play music, and then Lourdes naturally joined too.
Ian: I brought a piano, I thought we were gonna play piano and drums, I thought it was like the revolutionary new thing, but it sounded like crap.

MRR: Was that like an acoustic piano?
Ian: it was an electric piano, a Yamaha, like we used in the musical.
Lourdes: I don't think it sounded like crap, I think that it was hard to write songs, or be like "where do we go, with this song that we don't know how?"

MRR: So you mentioned the musical, what was that?
Ian: It was our musical about Mike the Headless Chicken, who was a chicken who got his head cut off and he lived for a long time.

MRR: Did you compose all the music and perform it?
Jesska: Ian and I went to a musical, the Hayward playhouse production of the Hank Williams story, and it was cool, but when they had a scene where they were in a car, they were just squatting down and pretending to be in a car and stuff, and we left and were all, "*Pfft!* we could do that!" *[laughter]* "We'll just meet on Tuesdays and then we'll eventually write a musical. If we meet once a week it'll eventually happen," and it did.

MRR: So you guys wrote and composed all the music for a musical production called...
Jesska: *Mike the Headless Chicken*! Ian taught himself how to play piano to write all those songs, and all those songs were so good.
Ian: I got *Beginner's Piano for Adults*, the book.

MRR: Where are you guys all from originally?
Lourdes: Chattanooga, Tennessee.

MRR: But you've been in the Bay for a while?
Lourdes: It'll be six years on 4/20.
Jesska: I'm from Tulsa, Oklahoma but I've been here for thirteen years now.
Ian: I was born in Kansas, but I moved out to the Bay Area when

I was two. So I'm from Albany, California, which is where Operation Ivy is from, I always was real proud of that. And then we got pulled over there recently and a cop complimented one of our friends' shirts and was like, "Operation Ivy, huh? Hell yeah, they're an Albany band!" I didn't think it was so cool.

MRR: Do you all see Don't Ask as a Region Rock band?
Lourdes: I feel like the people who were going out there and labeling things as Region Rock or putting things into genres would never put a band out of the region into that genre, but they may talk about how it is influenced by that style of music. Some really special bands from places a little out of the area might get included, but I think that there is something about actually coming out of that region as a band that gives you that title, or that label, or whatever you wanna call it. I don't know, what do you think?
Jesska: It does seem like it's like a special part of being in that home base.

MRR: Are there any bands or individuals that have inspired you or influenced you to make the sound that you make in Don't Ask?
Ian: A band that's always influenced me that's from here is Dory Tourette and the Skirtheads, of course. I used to be friends with Dory, and he taught me how to play the guitar the way that I do, and everything, so that's a big part of it. But with this band, too, I dunno, music from the '90s!
Jesska: I think that I don't have any band in particular that I could mention, but I think a thing that has been really fun about playing in this band is that it captures that *feeling* that you get from a lot of the bands that you love in general. It's got that anthemic, Chattanooga thing from Lourdes, and I also loved the Skirtheads. There's a lot of poppy elements, and rock elements, and punk elements, and all these different things that I always love in music and so it makes it really fun to be a person who gets to play the drums behind their awesome songwriting too. They both write songs that are the kind of music I love.
Ian: We're shameless about our pop music.
Jesska: I missed it when it wasn't around. There weren't a lot of poppy things around for a while.

MRR: Do you think that feeling you both mentioned was something you wanted to make happen here because it was missing? Or do you think there are a lot of bands that are doing that same thing? How do you think you fit into the context of punk in the Bay Area right now?
Jesska: Interestingly, here in the Bay Area, I feel like we were really well received, in this way that there weren't very many poppier bands in this style for a while. But then when we were on tour, it was different, more people still have that sort of thing. I think that we don't do it here as much anymore and so it felt really good to be part of a band that was having that sound come up again.

MRR: When you're talking about this poppy, anthemic sound, then would you describe your band as pop punk? Or do think that there's something else, or a need for another category or something?
Lourdes: I definitely wouldn't say we need our own category, but I mean, yeah, if someone that I don't know is like, "what kind of music do you play?" and I'm talking about Don't Ask, I'll say pop punk, and then sometimes depending on how much

I care about their opinion I'll say "but not like Blink-182."
Jesska: You'll say it's pop punk, but you'll just qualify the hell out of it. That's definitely what I do.

MRR: So maybe the term pop punk is really big and confusing, and includes a lot of divergent sounds?
Lourdes: Yeah.
Jesska: And a lot of things that are kind of gateway bands, like people have that kind of like "pop punk is stupid" thing, and so you're like, it's poppy, but not like NOFX! It's not like that!

MRR: Any bands / individuals that inspire you?
Lourdes: I thought about this recently and I was trying to figure it out. What I discovered was that I'm one of those people who puts on a tape and will listen to the same three records over and over and over again all day, at work, in my room, in my car. Even if it's a mix tape. I'm really influenced by whatever those records are. So, all of our songs, they have a similar sound because they're written by us, but I even go through this thing in my mind when I write a new song where I'm like, "oh shit, did I rip off that band?" And it's like, no you didn't rip off that band, but you did write a song that sounds very inspired by that band, and so I think that I'm inspired very immediately by something that I really really like.
Jesska: Yeah, I think that happens after you've read a novel or something too, and you've been so absorbed in that world for so long, that like when you're done reading that book, you find that the tone of your thoughts kind of fits the writer's style for a while, or the way that you speak or write, all of a sudden, there's a little bit of what that author was doing that's coming out of you. It's definitely the same for music. Like you've just been rolling around in that stuff for so long...how could it not come out in your art?

MRR: So, what's the stuff? What did you roll in?
Jesska: I think that question's for you. *[points at dog]*
Ian: Also I think we rip ourselves off a lot.
Lourdes: I write often when I'm distressed or distraught, and one thing I'm thinking about when I write a song and it's maybe too "woe is me," or too "woe is whatever," is I'll try to find a way to write the song so that more people can relate to it, and that some part of it becomes an uplifting thing, and that is definitely because of Eric Nelson, and his songwriting, and how he's always being like "we got this." Even if it's like "everything's really fucking hard," in the end he's like "*but it's OK, we have this, we have each other*." And I'm not saying that in any way am I a songwriter like Eric Nelson, I'm just saying sometimes if I've written a song, and it feels almost too dark, that I'll remember him and how he tries to kind of like bring it back to a positive place.

MRR: So, the vocals are really front and center in the Don't Ask recordings. Have you been the singer in bands before this, Lourdes, and Ian, or is this a new territory?
Ian: I've been singing in bands since I was a kid.

MRR: Tell us about the band you were in when you were a kid!
Ian: I was in a band called Icky Girlfriends, and that was me and my friend Ely and Tamara, and me and Ely were both 13, and Tamara was 16. We would all wear dresses

and trash the place when we'd play, and throw ourselves around, and we had all this youthful energy, and everybody seemed to really enjoy it 'cause I don't think there was any kids making bands at that time. We were kind of like runaways, we wouldn't go home and we'd hang out with all the punks, and that's kind of how I got raised and stuff. That wasn't really singing, that was more like "singing." Later I was in a band called High Anxiety, and I sang in that band, but the vocals weren't like Don't Ask, they weren't front and center, they would always be hidden behind some reverb or some distortion. I like this band because it's like the band's right in front of you, and they're saying what they say right to your face. We're not hiding.

Lourdes: I was in two bands before Mabs and Don't Ask. Before this, I was in Rowdy Downstairs, where I just sang, and then I started writing songs on bass and started playing those with a band called Homestrings.

MRR: The themes that you touch on in your music seem really personal at first, but also seem to carry some political connotations. Is that the way you think about it, or are you coming from more of a place of personal experience and then the fact that we all live in a society just makes it necessarily have connotations?

Lourdes: I think a lot of times it's just really personal stuff, things that I'm going through in that moment, and then sometimes I do have an awareness of how personal it's becoming and I try to broaden it and try to write some of the lines so they can cover, for me, the emotional outlet that I need when I say them or when I sing them, but that they can also be perceived as a bigger thing, or a larger idea for other people. I feel like that makes it more interesting for other people to listen to and they can interpret it the way that they want to, and it's not so directly and obviously about how I got hurt or whatever.

MRR: Do you participate in other activities related to punk, or is it mostly the band?

Jesska: I feel like everything we do is related to punk because if you've been a punk for a certain amount of time, you just can't separate any of the things that you do. Everything has that punk undertone, like your politics and your interests, and the way you treat people, and the things you care about, and all that stuff.

Lourdes: I'm very wrapped up in the word "punk" and I try not to be sometimes. By that I mean like, I think about riding my bike as a punk thing to do.

MRR: It's OK, because *Maximum Rocknroll* is a safe space for punks.

Jesska: The loaded "punk" word is really funny to talk about in such an institution as *Maximum Rocknroll*.

MRR: It's to be taken for granted here that everybody's a punk. Aside from being an ethos and a way of conceptualizing everything we do, do you think that the music keeps you connected to the community in punk, or do you think that it's the other way around?

Ian: I definitely think the music keeps me connected to the community ;cause it keeps me going out to shows, I think if I weren't playing in bands, I would not go to as many shows as I do, and I would lose some of the motivation. Even though I want to be around people and whatnot, I've got lots of social anxiety, and it makes it a lot easier to go to shows and have something to do while you're there. My values will always be with punk and community, but at the same time I could see myself losing some motivation to participate if I wasn't putting my art out there. Seems selfish, but...

Jesska: I think that it's changed a lot for me as I've gotten older. When I was younger and going to parties all the time and connecting with people on more of a personal face-to-face level, like, I knew everyone and went to all the stuff. I think that I just had more in me for the socializing part of the punk community, but I feel like as I've gotten older, I've pushed myself in more of a structured zone, where it's harder to socialize, and it's harder to have time to connect with people. So it feels really good to now be on the music side, and going to talk to people on that level, or have this designated time to hang out and still have a platform for participating but not in the same way. It feels like a growth, I feel like I appreciate this more than when I was in bands when I was younger, which was more to like just be part of a party, and now its like a cool way to connect.

Lourdes: I think that if Jesska and Ian were like, "Hey do you want to get in a van and go to a bunch of different cities every night and be in a room filled with strangers and hang out?" I'd be like "No!" But if they were like, "Hey, do you want to go on tour, and play music in a different city every night and hang out with a bunch of strangers?" I'd be like "Yeah! That sounds great." And so I think that the music definitely keeps me connected to the community and is constantly making that community grow for me. Being in a band is really cool for me because you're really nervous and standing in a room and then when you play, hopefully, someone is like "Hey man that was really cool," and you're like "thanks" and then you have a conversation with someone you wouldn't have talked to. And then you find a place to stay, and then you meet their housemates, and then you eat breakfast together or they show you the cool pizza place or they take you to the corner store to get your bubble water.

MRR: Something that I think is a theme that you've all mentioned, that I didn't expect necessarily, is connection, and how important that is. It sounds like that's really vital for each individual person in the band and also maybe as a group goal. Do you agree?

Lourdes: We're all really social people, either that or these two are tricking me really well. For me connection is human, it's really important, and the more people you have that you can relate to and you can be around, and you feel like you have on your side, the more comfortable you're gonna be. Sometimes being surrounded by people you know is really hard, too, because you feel like you have to be a certain way.

Jesska: That is true. I think that we've had so much loss and hard time in our scene and in everybody's scene right now. Depending on how you mourn, and how you show up to changing and self care and all that stuff, it can be hard to remember to take care of yourself in a way that feels familiar and healing to you. We have been living our lives as punks or whatever for so long and you are used to being like, "Yeah, I go to a show and I talk to people and I hang out" but sometimes you just can't talk to people or you just can't connect in the

same way that you used to. You know it'll be healing in a way if you go out, so it's nice to set it up in a way where you're like, I'm doing something, I'm playing music, I'm going to be with these people, and I'm going to connect with them in some way, and it's gonna feel good even if it's gonna feel different.

MRR: Don't Ask has performed at several venues or events that are outside of the typical DIY or punk setting, how do you get connected to those kinds of shows and why do you enjoy playing them?
Lourdes: Are we talking about Donna's Birthday?

MRR: Is it just that one?
Lourdes: I would say that the weirder shows we've played we owe to Ian because Ian is really good about making friends all over.
Ian: I ask for shows from people who don't throw shows.
Lourdes: From all different walks of life.
Jesska: Tell em about Donna!
Ian: Donna is the bartender at the Townhouse bar in Vallejo, I think it's the only gay bar up there. She's the bartender and everyone in town's favorite person. She had a birthday party and she knew that I played in a band, I don't think she knew that we did punk music or anything, and she just thought "Ian's a nice guy, he probably plays nice music."
Jesska: We've gone two years in a row now, and both years there was face painting
Lourdes: There's so much food, and wild cakes, and everyone there is like, a real character. Everyone there is a real character.
Jesska: There was a Muppet sex cake last year.
Lourdes: They are so nice and so welcoming. For me, it kind of feels like going to the South. Except for I'm not as scared of wearing my big gay ring.

MRR: Got any releases?
Jesska: We're still coasting on that record we put out a couple of months ago. Recorded by Peter Avery at Secret Secret, he does Fully Intercoastal Records, but the record came out on Deimos Records.
Ian: You can get it online at www.deimosrecords.com
Ian: Deimos Records is a record label that me and Rizzy run, Rizzy was in Out Of Spite and plays in Big Rip. What we do is we collect music from around the East Bay, we just hit up bands and we buy the music from them cash, and we always buy just two copies of whatever they have, and then we re-sell it at a little lemonade-stand kiosk we have, and we sell it online also.

MRR: So is Deimos a distro or a label?
Ian: It's a label, we put out some records, we mostly put out our own bands because we don't have any money.
Jesska: Are we the first official release of Deimos Records?
Ian: There were some other ones. The High Anxiety record and the Two Lazy Boys—me and Rizzy are both in Two Lazy Boys.
Lourdes: I wouldn't say that it's not a distro!
Ian: What we're working on doing is sending all the music out as regional packages to records stores around the country with little cardboard stands—It's only East Bay punk—and this music's really hard to get because just us trying to give people cash, it was still extremely difficult. We had to go to everyone's house and make them go find their record in their house, and then we give them money.

MRR: Punks hate actually selling their records.
Ian: They do. They like to use the records as furniture instead. Use the boxes as a coffee table.
Jesska: Melt em down and make bowls.

MRR: We have some questions that were sent in by the internet. Jordan asks, "How did you get so good? How is Jesska so perfect? How do I become the president of your fan club?"
Jesska: I don't know if that is one that I can answer!

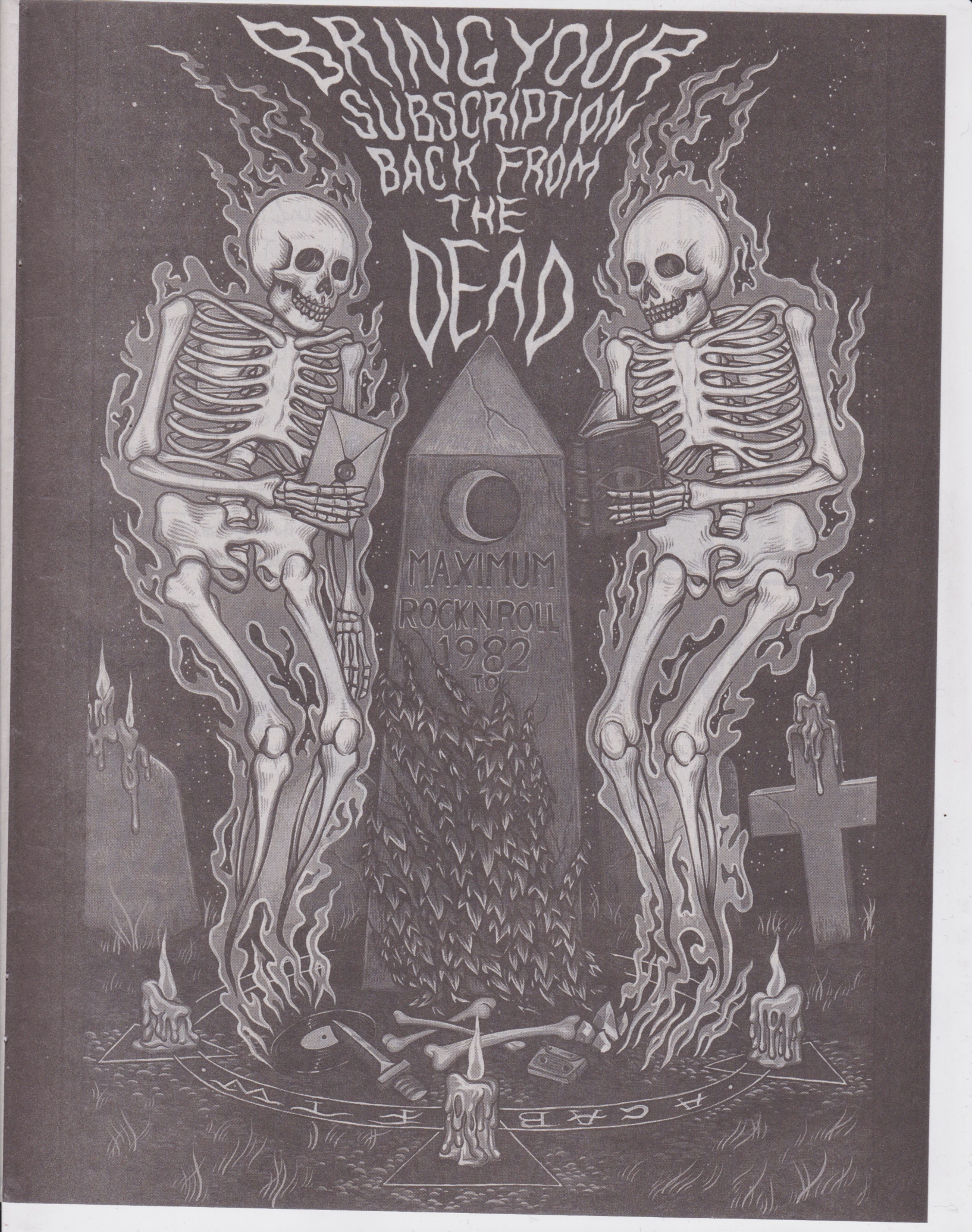
MRR: Maybe you can talk about how quickly you became a virtuoso, and how long you've been playing.
Jesska: I used to play bass and guitar, but I never really felt passionately about them, like I mentioned before, I think I was just going through the motions playing them, and I would drink a lot and turn my bass down when I was playing. And then I finally discovered that playing the drums is so fun and I want to do it all the time!

MRR: Spencer asks, "who were your first crushes?"
Lourdes: Mine was this guy named Richie, that was in kindergarten and I saw him from afar. I loved him and we were supposed to be together, and then we were, and then one day I went back into kindergarten and his little attendance popsicle stick where he had his name written—I watched the teacher go over and pick it up and throw it into the trash, and she was like, "Richie moved," and I was broken, and that is what every Don't Ask song is about.

MRR: I'm so sorry. I'm not laughing.
Lourdes: I still wanna know where he went.
Ian: Maybe he'll read this and—
Lourdes: Richie!!!! I love you!!!
Jesska: In elementary school, Matthew Spaugie gave me flowers after my acting debut as Ruth in Pirates of Penzance, and we went out for about four days, and then we broke up, but I can't remember why.
Lourdes: Cause the four days had passed.
Jesska: Yeah, our attention spans.
Ian: Ok, mine's a pretty fucked up story. When I was in middle school, the first girl I had a crush on, her name was Nicole. We used to walk home from school together, and one day we were walking—and this is messed up—but we came across an injured baby bird that was dying. It was about to die. So I took it and put it in a bag, and took it out of its misery, cause I felt bad for it and that's something that I'd been taught by my parents, it's like a suffering animal. Nicole did not think that was OK at all and thought that I was a crazy person.

MRR: Final question, from an anonymous inquisitor: "What's the best way to cuddle in bed while you're sleeping? My arms or shoulders always get sore."
Ian: Don't Ask.

dontask1.bandcamp.com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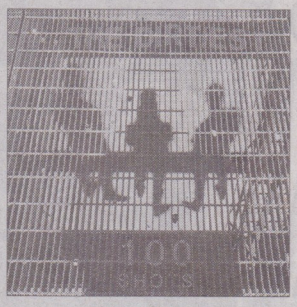

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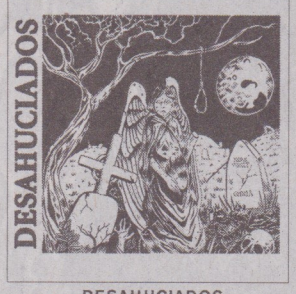

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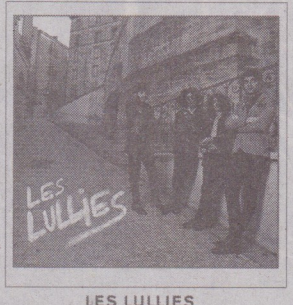

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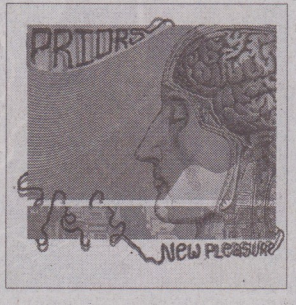


PRIORS
NEW PLEASURE LP

Photo by Elsa Fosca. IG: fem__punk

TROIKA

Interview by _____
Photos provided by the band
unless noted otherwise

Spain's Troika are furious as hell, delivering their strikes against society's bullshit and being complicit in the harms they cause. Una Vida, their latest 7", is a ripper and should belong in the collection of any punk who is interested in liberating ideas enmeshed in an aggressive yet still melodic framework.

MRR: First, I would like you to introduce yourselves a little, who you are, what relationship with music or playing music do you have and how did you three end up in Troika?,

Laura: I started in music through the church choir *[laughter]*. That was my initiation, I played the piano, and then I became "dark" but...no no, now seriously... I started playing bass in Lökhul, a dis- band, then in one called Redneck Surfers playing country. Finally, I played in Asinus, a punk rock band from Salamanca. When we arrived in Madrid, we felt good together, and Blanca suggested to set up a group. We were in a very shabby place in Hortaleza (a suburb of Madrid) and we began to terribly cover Otan while we ate crisps and tried to save the world.

Blanca: In my teenage years, I listened to a lot of terrible bands from the Iberian punk scene, but then I found the projects that started to really move me because of what they shouted through their unbearable noise. Some girlfriends and I started to meet at COKO squat and we spent days and nights taking our first punk steps in that rat trap. After that, the guys and I started Accidente, but then I wanted to play guitar and I wanted to spend time with women. I found two allies who already had contributed a lot to the punk scene and went beyond attending concerts... Between all of us, we had participated in radio shows, concert collectives, labels and distribution projects, a record store and different underground musical projects. I looked for Laura and Paloma because they were not only engaged with punk music, but they had a great passion for building a radical and political scene: a strong counter-cultural punk network in town... and I fell in love with them.

Paloma: I come from a small town where nothing ever happened called Toledo, and came to Madrid willing to start things and do stuff. I started playing drums in "Raw Paw," and after a concert, Blanca approached me with the proposal to start a new band. She made googly eyes at me and so I said yes. From the first rehearsal I knew that, even though, as a band we could not achieve much, I wanted to be friends.

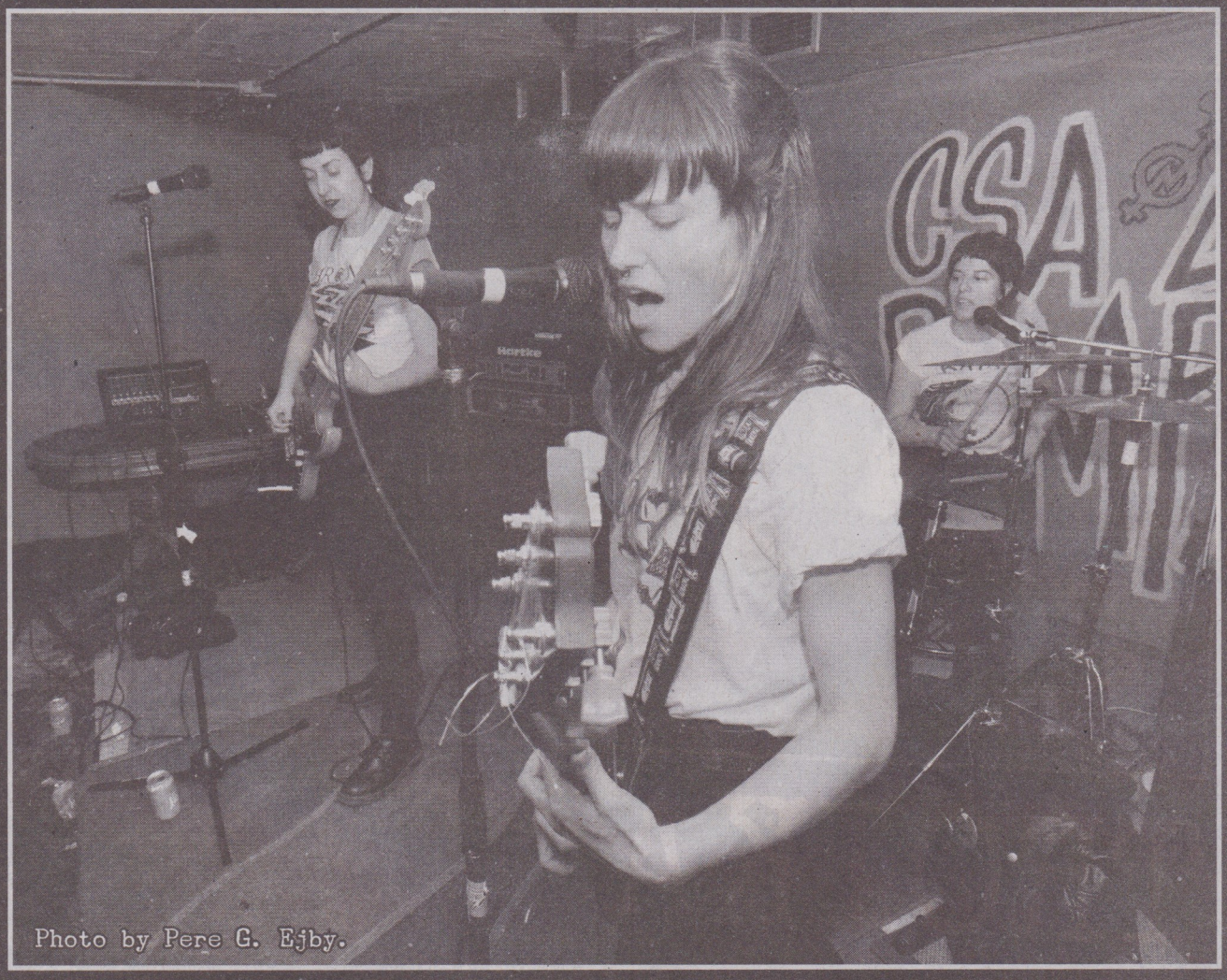


Photo by Pere G. Ejby.

MRR: Troika says "if I want, I can." How much of your personal and political life is there in the lyrics written by Troika? What's the need to talk about these issues in your lyrics?

Blanca: Well, what we say comes more from a howl of self-empowerment than from the certainty that we can win... We have many wishes, but we are also aware of our limitations. As in life, we want to recognize our potential strength to fight things we hate and support each other... That does not mean that we are always brave woman or that we are above those fears. When we started, we barely knew how to hold our instruments, but we have worked hard, we have written songs and self-released a demo tape. We recently put out an EP while living in three separate cities! And we have toured Europe and played a lot around Spain too. So, yeah, if you want something, go for it, that's our motto.

Laura: We want to show our anger and our desire to break everything that limits us, and that is what we try to say through a certain language. That does not mean that we do not constantly feel insecurity and doubts. Our words, our songs...come from our debates, about the spaces we inhabit, which are very different and give us many points of view.

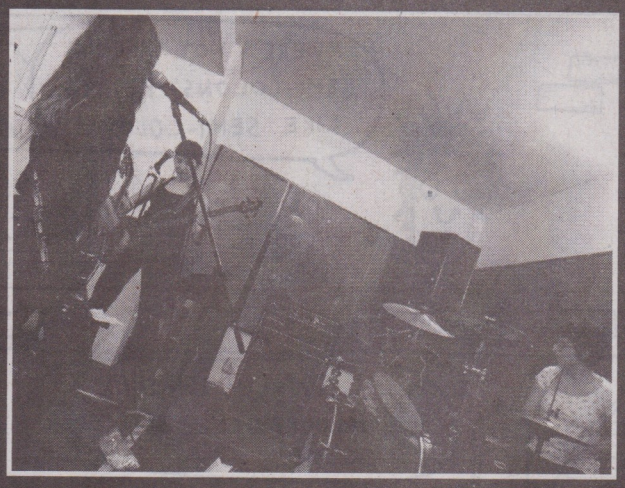
MRR: Troika is a band with very political lyrics, and this is not so common anymore in punk. For you, what is the need to talk about these issues? What do you think about each scene or about punk in general?

Paloma: Well, in the practice room we talk more than we play. The lyrics come from those conversations where we share our conflicts and passions. To express this in our lyrics is a visceral need, and spitting it all out through our music has become a necessity. There are many styles in punk, but mainly, it has been a shared weapon to get these things out.

Laura: For us, the good thing about punk as a means of expression is that it allows us to share experiences and contrast them with the world...to raise new ideas and questions. I like bands of all kinds, but personally, it is the first time that I composed the lyrics with friends in the practice room, discussing about them, going beyond music, deep into what we think about our own experiences and practices.

MRR: I get from the lyrics an antagonistic position that leads you to be critical with things that happen within anti-authoritarian political spaces.

Blanca: I believe that punk is not isolated from society and reflects the culture where it is embedded. The



three of us are part of a context, and it is precisely because we believe in a radical change that we want it to be a better project and to improve. We will reach that aim only if we keep a self-critical attitude. Our lyrics are about conflicts, about not having the tools to overcome values that we reject in society but that we constantly reproduce. Power, privilege, hierarchies are taboos that we do not want to talk about in our scenes but that are causing us trouble and need to be discussed and transformed, or abolished. We seek to build our own discourses and struggles, to make public issues that sometimes run the risk of being untouchable and become dogmas.

MRR: Troika lyrics arise from the need to put forth debates, ask questions, go further, and transcend some political discourses... They are incisive and make you think. Two of the ones that I feel are framed within this self-criticism and this invitation to debate are "Pelea con Cabeza," and "Confrontación."
Blanca: In the first one, we claim the right to express our thoughts even if they do not match the mainstream discourse within our own scene. We sometimes feel that the punk community is very inflexible, and that penalizes dissonant voices within. When punk was born, it was fearless, intuitive, authentic, and radical, but now we feel that in certain environments you have to fit and adapt or you will be banned. We have to give ourselves the right to be wrong, experiment, discuss, and change, or just think differently, because we are fighting for a critical scene and society.

Regarding the second one, we claim that it is our right to be ourselves and not censor our behaviors, just because we live in a patriarchal culture. We want to be safe everywhere and make the streets, venues, media, or pubs unsafe spaces for our enemies. When women, gays, lesbians, or the trans community claimed safe spaces in the name of feminism, they were struggling for their lives and generating the possibility to inhabit and fight in spaces in which you were not supposed to; they were confronting stereotypes, harassment, hate speech, and marginalization. We think that this idea has been diluted a little in our day; we have lost the revolutionary component of their argument. We want the whole world to be a safe space for us and will not accept parents, teachers, police, or even our partners telling us how we should move, dress, dance, or live in order to prevent an assault. We want to knock at the doors of those who make our spaces unsafe and generate a situation of conflict and tension until patriarchy comes to an end.

MRR: Both in "Opinólogos" and in "Periodista Enemigo" you talk about new media forms, social networks, and the mass media. In what context is your criticism framed?
Paloma: I studied journalism and at some point in my life I thought that was what I wanted to do...but once I discovered how the world of communication works from inside, the companies and the interests involved, I moved away from that idea. I feel a love-hate contradiction with this subject. Information supports power, and new technologies imply immediacy, so a lie or a biased truth can circulate all over the world and harm people, communities, and projects in seconds. Also, suddenly everyone becomes an expert in everything, but at the same time, there is not much space for debate or exchange of ideas. We may "like" what someone else said, but we rarely go in depth...
Blanca: We feel that mass media are part of the problem; they are there to serve the elite's interests and support repression, so they will never be allies. And as before, when we act like them in our own information / communication DIY networks, we are reproducing their shit.

MRR: Open mic.
Paloma: I would say that Troika is not a band that stands out for its sound. We are a debate, a question, we are three voices that have something to say and want to contribute, share, and learn together on how to keep moving forward through this world full of inconsistencies.
Blanca: Thanks a lot to Miriam for her great interview, and for her punk / feminist / rebel inspiration in these territories. We are also grateful to the *MRR* crew for inviting us to be part of this longstanding project.

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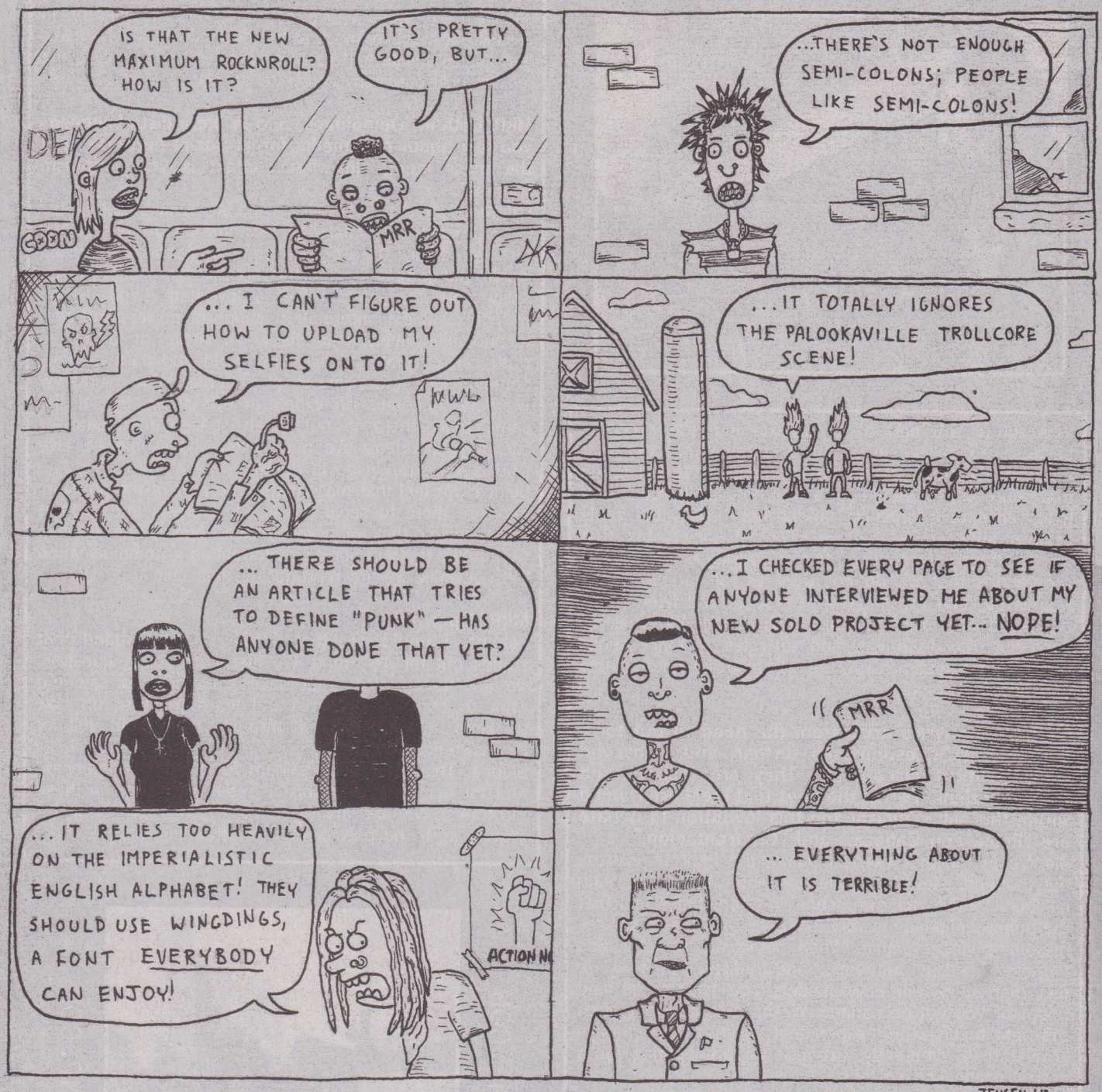

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FUCKED AND BOUND

Lisa Mungo and Brian McClelland of Seattle's Fucked and Bound are unapologetic about what they bring to the hardcore scene. Fucked and Bound's recently released debut LP, Suffrage, casts a wide net both musically and lyrically. The D-beat sound of "Zero Fucks" addresses the influx of self-important assholes newly occupying space in Seattle. "Abuse of Registry" brings bone-crunchingly heavy sludge alongside heavily metaphorical lyrics, further enriching an album that covers a vast section of the hardcore spectrum.

Interview by Jordan Alexander.

Photos by Eric Tra, Bobby Cochran, and Uly Curry.

MRR: Can you give some insight into your history in the punk scene?
Brian: I started in hardcore bands in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I played in Van Buren, Excruciation, and Westwood Tigers out there. Played for years around the Albuquerque area and then moved to Seattle around 2008. I started going to shows up here at the various DIY locations, VFW halls and such.
Lisa: When I was in Portland I started to actively pursue heavy music in general, and when I got up here to Seattle even more so. Once I got actively involved in the DIY circuit here in Seattle is when I became more involved with punk / hardcore specifically.

MRR: What sort of bands did you play in before this?
Lisa: A lot of heavy bands. Bands that sort of crawl around this scene. *[To Brian]* I don't know, what do you call Ox?
Brian: Post-metal.
Lisa: Heavy-ish

MRR: How did Fucked and Bound come together?
Brian: Lisa and I were playing in He Whose Ox Is Gored, and we had a number of songs that had been sidelined over the years for various reasons, riffs that just didn't quite fit that were a little more aggressive than we normally go for and after a while we had enough of them that they just started taking shape. They started to have their own sound and aesthetic. Those songs are what became our debut LP, *Suffrage*.

MRR: How did you come to name *Suffrage*?
Lisa: It was kind of the last thing we did. It didn't happen overnight. It took a little bit of time to figure out what the messaging was.

MRR: I was reading through the lyrics, and my first thought wasn't "this is a feminist record." That is, until I read "Creeps on the Street" and to a lesser extent "#GTFO." "#GTFO" sounds basically like it's about being a bartender, just kinda putting up with bullshit. "Creeps on the Street," on the other hand, is a very uniquely female perspective kind of song. I think there's probably a lot of women who can identify with that one.
Lisa: All of 'em. "Punishers [on Deck]," and "Get Inside." They're all touching on a similar thing. "[Get Inside]" is taking on the perspective of the person who is creeping, y'know? It's imagining what's going on inside their mind. You wonder, how could a person think that way? It's so predatory. Or just tunnel vision. It's important to understand the way minds work if you have any hopes of changing them, or at least getting an individual to see things from a different vantage point.

MRR: You, Lisa, during live performances regularly mention that you're addicted to porn...
Brian and Lisa: *[laughter]*

MRR: ...before the song "Private Room." What's your relationship to that addiction? Is it the kinda think where you're like "I fuckin' love porn and it's tight!" or is it more like you don't actually want to be doing this thing, but you're compelled?
Lisa: It's both. It's just like any addiction you may have. I suppose that it was a secret addiction because I pursued it in private. Well...*[laughter]* until now. I think as long as I can keep from becoming too obsessed with it I'll be fine. Its similar to the way someone might handle alcohol or any other kind of drug. I go over it in that track. Those are definitely some of the ideas that I explore there. Porn is also beautiful and fun.
Brian: That point is interesting because it's also about human intimacy. There's all this tension about how we view sex and intimacy. Everything boils down to how we handle it and talk about complex themes within those issues. This band gives us that opportunity to engage in these types of conversations.

MRR: So it serves as a sort of spotlight for you and others?
Brian: Yeah.
Lisa: I also think that people are extremely sexually oppressed. Everywhere I've traveled, I feel that most people are sexually oppressed. Part of the reason I think I disrobe at shows is just a "fuck you" to the construct that I should feel ashamed of my body, my sex, my sexual parts, which is absurd. Many people are very sexual by nature. It's a matter of controlling it. Many (not all) are intensely sexual creatures and we should celebrate that, but we also have to make sure that we're constantly checking in and maintaining an element of control. I think finding that

balance is kind of what I'm talking about in that song and others.

MRR: Has anyone said anything to you about disrobing at shows?
Lisa: Sometimes I'll see pictures after the fact. If you zoom in to see the variation in people's reactions...
Brian: *[laughter]* It's phenomenal!
Lisa: It's all telling. No one has to say anything to me because I see these visual representations of what is probably going on in people's minds. It covers the whole spectrum. People can feel how they want to feel. It's not for me to dictate an idea. I would rather just be this madness and let people take what they're gonna take from it.

MRR: It seems like you channel different things at different shows. Some days it's very much a camaraderie and togetherness. Other days it's very aggressive, very fuck you. What leads to those different moods for you?
Lisa: People see pictures and assume the same things are happening at every show. To many people's surprise, and I've mentioned this before, I do whatever I feel comes natural in that moment. For example, there are nights where I'm feeling emotionally out of bounds. I might be hanging from the rafters or taking all my clothes off. Then, there are these nights where I feel very insecure going into a show and I stay very much in a lane or even a corner. I'm still emoting and I'm still feeling, but I'm doing it differently. It really has a lot to do with the audience and the energy I'm feeding off of beforehand and during.

I remember going into one show hearing / dealing with so much misogyny that I felt like I was going to fucking lose it. I got so angry leading up to the set that I was actually seeing red...I was coming at them way more aggressively than anyone else at the show, and I knew that they had to take whatever I was throwing at them because it was part of that moment, it was public, and that was in retrospect interesting to me psychologically. It felt so unfair yet satisfying. I was so angry about the things they were saying about women before the show...I felt like in that moment, coming at them as aggressively as I possibly could without actually crossing a line and committing violence was justified. Those same guys came up to me after the show and showed nothing but respect...which felt confusing. Why did near violence, aggression ,and madness deserve respect? Why does it in a general sense? Why does this method seem to work in opening doors to further dialogue...and is that even OK? Is it worth it? I ended that night making a point to engage them more. I listened and shared my perspective and they shared theirs, and I realized later that this was a learning point for myself, too, that I must continue to challenge my own ideas about what I'm doing, how I'm delivering it and ultimately why.

MRR: You've both been in a few different music scenes and done extensive touring. You've seen a lot of different scenes over the years. What do you feel makes the Seattle DIY scene unique?
Brian: I think the Seattle DIY scene is pretty phenomenal. There's just a ton of different bands doing so many different styles within it. I'm always surprised. I'll randomly catch bands at the Victory Lounge where I work or at Black Lodge where we volunteer and help run that space. There is a nonstop supply of bands doing cool, fun, unique, creative things. Sometimes people take it for granted. It's easy to take for granted when you haven't seen other scenes.

I come from a small town and we didn't have that. It's one thing that I'm just endlessly appreciative of here. There's just always new bands! There's always kids trying new stuff, moving the scene forward at all levels. You can just feel the excitement off kids, whether it's their first show or their hundredth show. If it's their first band or their tenth band. I feel really thankful to be a part of it. It's really inspiring.

MRR: Do either of you have any projects that you're doing apart from each other?
Brian: Yeah, I stay busy quite a bit. I just like to play. I'm trying to double down personally on the amount that I play so that I can flesh out skills in different areas and stay active. For me it's my personal therapy, so if I get frustrated or have issues in my life I need to work out, I play music about it. If times get tough, I usually take on other projects to compensate for that. Also, as a musician I just like doing homework and learning new skills. I'll routinely pick up a little cover gig or fill in for another band.

We've done stuff separately, but we also get along really

well. That sort of chemistry is what makes projects work really well, and you don't get that every day.
Lisa: Yeah, it feels effortless. It could be any genre. We mess around with all different types of music in our practice space all the time. Really, it's a matter of time being dedicated to two pretty active bands already for me personally. Also, still having to make money at my day job!
Brian: *[laughter]*
Lisa: Also, I live in an environment that's got its own rewards, but challenges as well. It doesn't always afford a lot of extra time for things. That being said, I'm always thinking of ways to sculpt out time for a solo project. It's always in the back of my mind. I have songs that I've been archiving. On top of that, a friend recently got me interested in doing music for video games and / or film.

MRR: What would a solo project of yours sound like?
Lisa: I'm obsessed with [John] Carpenter. Everyone who knows me knows I'm obsessed with the '80s. *[laughter]* Like, really ridiculous amounts of obsession. I think it would have a throwback feel to it. Every time I write something it starts very visual. I'm telling a story in my own head about it, so ultimately my dream would be to work in film at some point.

MRR: What specifically brought you to Seattle?
Brian: I just wanted to play more music. I was playing in bands in Albuquerque which were great, y'know, really fun, but there wasn't a ton going on. I wanted to go explore someplace that had a little more active music scene. So, I told my bands at the time that I'd come back if we got something going. I was in a lot of bands that were sort of getting ready to put out records and things like that. I wanted to be a part of something more active, so I came up here and started pursuing different bands and scenes, and really just trying to get into it.
Lisa: I was in Portland for a while. I was going to school there, casually pursuing music. I don't know, there's no real good fuckin' reason I came here. I just wanted to be in a different environment...a new place, new space, meet new musicians, new people.

MRR: How long has it been?
Lisa: I don't know, almost ten years? Before that it was like every six months I was moving on to some other thing, so I'm basically going out of my fuckin' mind right now. *[laughter]* Just kidding! No, I like it. As long as I tour, I'm fine!

MRR: Do you think you'd ever leave Seattle?
Brian: Lisa and I have talked about it. We've thought about going different places...
Lisa: *[laughter]*
Brian: ...but you know, honestly, I think this is one of the better arrangements that I've been a part of. I've been personally trying to work towards the point that we're at now for a long time. I grew up in a small town and I wanted to move to a bigger town. That's when I moved to Albuquerque. From there, I still wanted to go somewhere a little more active and came here. There is a lot of really special stuff going on in Seattle. Not that this sort of magic excitement isn't happening other places, I just feel that I probably wouldn't be able to be as involved as we've managed to be at this point. I really enjoy where we're at now.

MRR: *[To Lisa]* What about you?
Lisa: *[laughter]*
Brian: She wants to move sometimes. *[laughter]* Which I understand too.
Lisa: Like I said earlier, I've never lived somewhere as long as I have here, and I'm a person who just wants to be in a different place every day.
Brian: Got that wanderlust!
Lisa: *[laughter]* Yes! It's part of my personality. I just want things to change all the time.
Brian: There's definitely places we've thought about moving, and I've definitely entertained it. I like to travel to, y'know? That's why we prioritize the touring. You can still go experience parts of the country, different scenes and things like that, but I think we're fortunate to have a headquarters like we do.
Lisa: There's no denying that, and that's ultimately why I haven't pressed harder. Seattle is really, truly an amazing place. The value [that we get from being here] is so high. It mostly has to do with the people. The environment is great, but more than that it's the people.

MRR: You've both done a fair amount of touring in Fucked and Bound and Ox. Have you been to any other cities with attractive punk scenes that you might want to move to, were you to move?
Brian: Denver has a really good scene. Denver has always been really supportive of us. I like Minneapolis a *lot*. I don't mind the cold.
Lisa: I want to go to New York!
Brian: New York is always rad. I like places like Atlanta. New Orleans is just fantastic. Those are just phenomenal cities that have tons of cool venues and bands.
Lisa: Part of me also thinks that beyond going someplace obvious that's big that would have a huge pull of people is going someplace like Louisville, Kentucky.
Brian: Louisville is also really cool.
Lisa: Louisville is super cool! I keep hearing how cool it is. With a place like that, you have a smaller but strong pocket of people who create scenes, and it is really tight knit.
Brian: What we've talked about for years is the idea of a headquarters. You don't just stay there all the time. It's like a centrally located place where you can sort of tour out and strategically hit multiple areas. If you look at it in that way, a spot like Louisville or Nashville, something like that is centrally located so you can go in several directions tour wise. It's not too far to go up to Chicago or Minneapolis. You could go up to New York, or down to Austin. There are plenty of really cool scenes in that area. On the West Coast, we're a little farther spread out. Seattle is fantastic as a music scene, but sometimes we do feel a little isolated in terms of distance.
Lisa: It can also be more fun if you're not driving ten hours from place to place. Instead you're driving two hours. You get to spend more time in the environment, in the area. You get to talk to people longer. When you're on tour, you're in a van for ten hours and that's all you're doing. Which is fine, I'll do it forever, whatever, but... it can be nice to see the sights, too! You know, live.

Fucked and Bound's debut LP Suffrage *is out on Atomic Action Records.*

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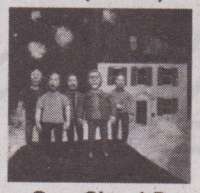

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TIM AND TH

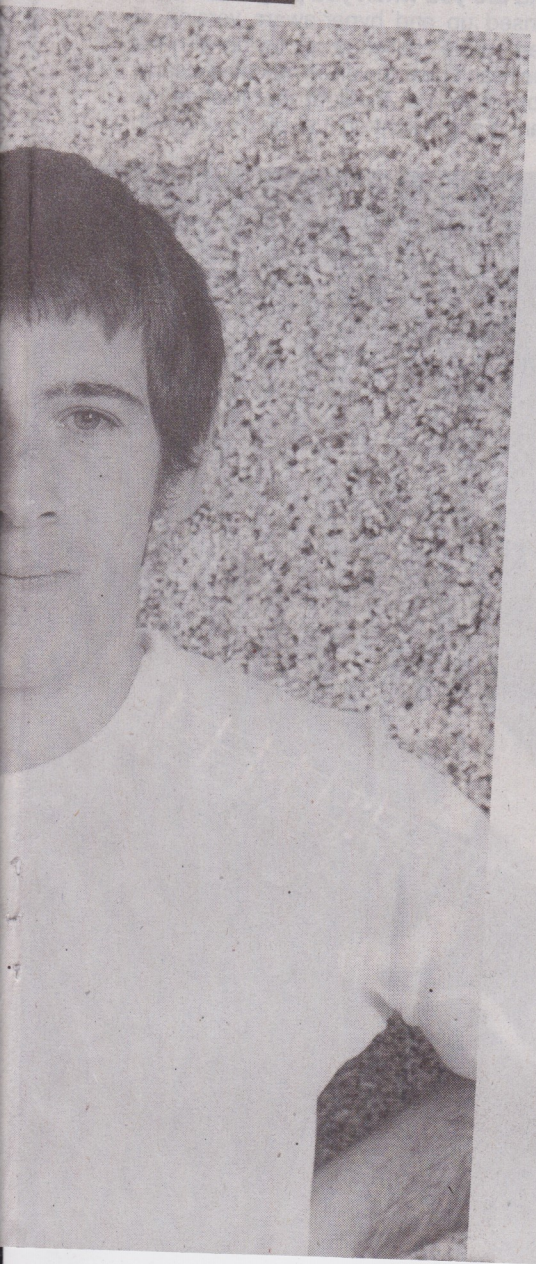
All friendships should involve a good degree of jousting. Tim and the Boys is a Sydney-based trio active since 2016 whose recent LP on Meatspin Records has been purchased and listened to by a range of satisfied musical consumers. They make weirdly anthemic drum-machine fuelled punk rock that switches from distanced to sincere, ambivalent to passionate and back again. In an era where the stakes around who gets to speak and about what could scarcely be higher, a band of men at the very least willing to consider their place in all this is nothing if not brave! I laced up my boots for a scenic tour of some Australia's finest gray areas with Dan (Bass) and Tim himself (vocals, Drum machine.) Orienteering through the power of personae, occasionally treacherous song interpretations, morality, and excommunication in both punk and religious upbringings, we cut through some bluster, see the woods for the trees, conquer a few slippery slopes, and arrive somewhere raw and real.

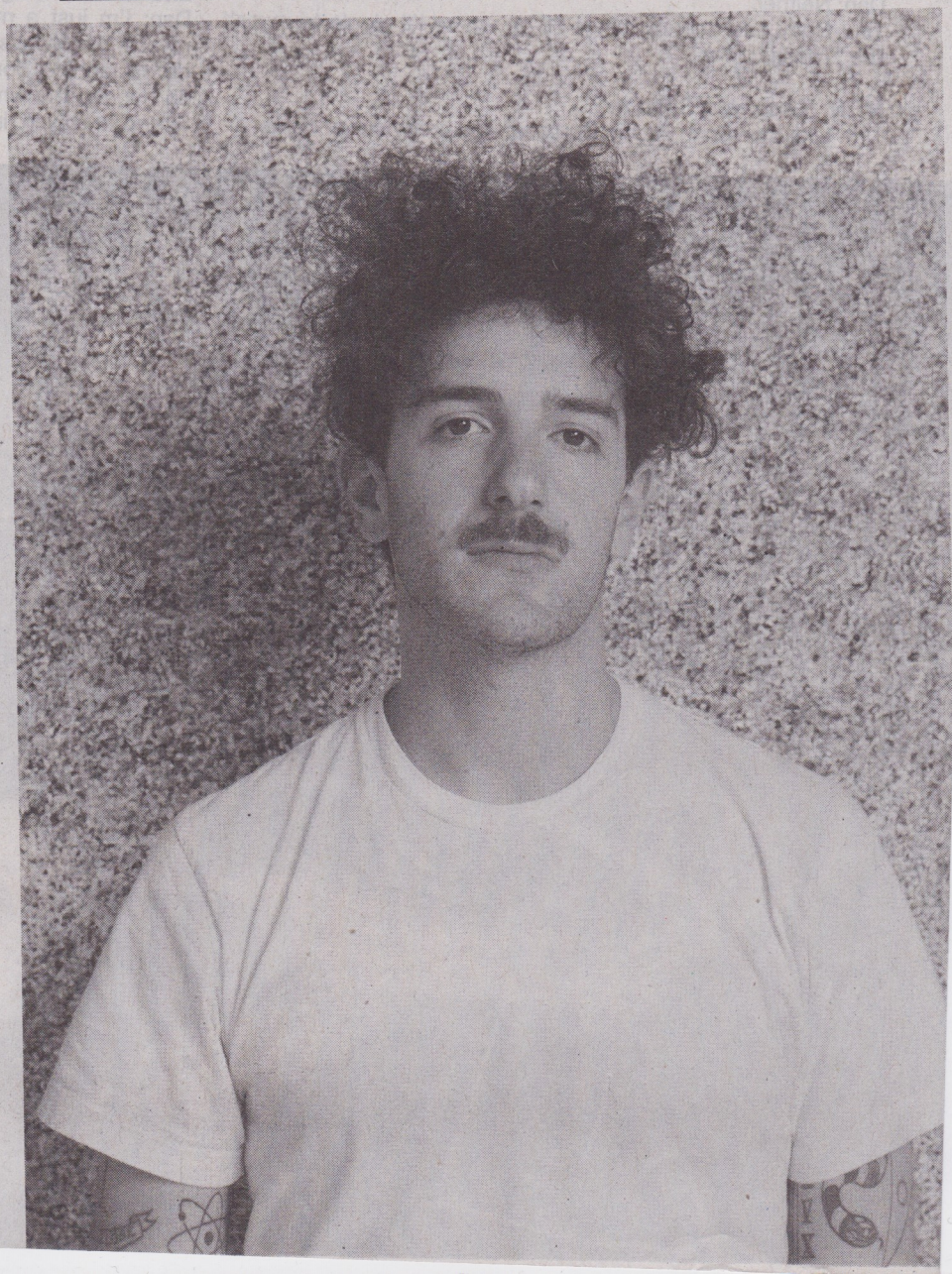
Interview by Bryony Beynon.

Photos by David Forcier and Max Goodman.

Tim and the Boys is Dan Grosz on bass, Will Harley on guitar, and Tim Collier on vocals, synth and drums machine.

HE BOYS





MRR: You were supposed to be a hardcore band, what happened?
Tim: I wanted to start one! Dan suggested using the drum machine. I think I put a Facebook call out asking for members. Our friends Max and Mel both responded, so we had a few practices with them before we figured out our final lineup. I did initially try to sing hardcore over the top and Dan was like "No..."
Dan: I just wanted him to try singing in his own voice.

MRR: Are we talking a late-era Rollins growl here?
Tim: Quite high on the dog-barking scale.

MRR: You told me that were you to lose or delete things from your drum machine, it would mean the end of the band. Human memory is just as fallible, but having a small box member that you could just leave on the bus? Why would you do that?
Tim: I've had that drum machine since I was a teenager, and I've had nightmares before gigs about the memory wiping and waking up sweating like "The drum machine has died!" It's actually the scariest with writing new songs because we have stems of the album tracks, obviously, but I fear the reprogramming because I don't really know how it works.

MRR: Is Tim and the Boys a clever or a stupid band? Why?
Dan: Neither.
Tim: Both! Like there's things I'll do where I'll giggle to myself like "That's clever..."

MRR: *[Laughter]* Such as?
Tim: Like the song "Plastic Curtains" is a pretty clever name.

MRR: Why?
Dan: Vaginoplasty.
Tim: Like "beef curtains."

MRR: What? Oh. OK. So it's a pun?
Tim: It was just funny to me. That song is actually more about why anyone would fake the way that they live a life so they can create some idyllic fantasy that will never fulfill their real desires.

MRR: I mean, vaginoplasty could definitely fulfill someone's desires?
Tim: Of course. I think what I wanted to deal with in the song was people who want to make surface changes in their life and expect to feel fulfilled as a human. Having a child to play out some unfulfilled life fantasy vicariously, or people who move to the country to "get away from it all." If you aren't happy with your sex life, getting your vagina tightened isn't gonna help, and making a baby clone of yourself isn't gonna help.
Dan: I don't actually know if it's up to decide if we are smart or dumb, it's kind of a trap. Everyone is both.

MRR: I wanted to ask you about personas, especially as part of playing live. To me that's a temporary way we have to play out the fantasy roles you just mentioned. Depending on the persona you adopt, there are varying results for performer and audience, right? Who are you when you play?
Dan: I'm just a more tensed up and hyper-aware version of myself. I'm always focused on the challenge of playing with the drum machine. Sometimes I can't hear the drum machine clearly, so I spend the whole show staring at the light that flashes the tempo to stay in time. Staring at the light on it to play along with

that makes it a lot harder.
Tim: When I write lyrics, I'll often do it from the point of view of a character, a fraction of a person I can channel. In each song I want to portray their emotions, but that doesn't become the whole show. There is no hiding me, I am there, but live, I might try to indulge certain parts of a song and the character I was thinking about.

MRR: What about with your song called "White Guys," are you not just distancing yourself from who you are, or at least from the worst excesses of what a white man can be?
Dan: When we play that song, it's a direct address to the blind confidence of being white men, the belligerence of simply being that thing, especially when it comes right after an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land we are playing on.
Tim: That song isn't just a finger pointing exercise, though. I mean I could have called it, like, "Racist Cunts" instead, and then not have had to reckon with the fact that I'm included in it. Like the lyrics to that song are a list of things I've had people say to me in defense of their own racism, misogyny or classism, all of which I'm trying to name, but I also have probably used some of these excuses myself in the past. I'm not trying to moralize myself out of the issue, otherwise it would be very hypocritical.

MRR: The first time I saw you play live was at the Union Hotel. I didn't know any of you, and you announced prior to the song "Hey" that "this song's about raping a Spice Girl." For me...
Tim: I didn't say that.

MRR: ...That's definitely what I heard. That is what was coming from the stage and what I took away from the gig. I honestly immediately wrote you all off as edgelords at that point, and I have been slowly walking myself back from that point ever since!
Dan: Did you really say that?
Tim: I said "This song is about rape *and* the Spice Girls." I was five drinks in and trying to get on with the song, of course there was an element of performance to it, for sure. Using that word on stage in front of people who weren't even there to see us.

MRR: So what were you trying to do by bringing that word into the room?
Tim: The Spice Girls lyrics that we use were actually written by an all-male writing team, and I was interested in how when you put a male voice like mine to them, and bring the idea of power structures into it, it becomes more gross and sinister. It was meant to be confronting. "*Slam your body down and wind it all around*" seemed like such an intense line to repurpose. We'd also just watched *The Decline of Western Civilization* before the gig, and I was revved up for some edgy banter.

MRR: We've had some really interesting conversations before today about how people engage or critically confront their own maleness in their art and music. I guess that's a clear case where intent didn't *quite* match the impact?
Tim: I thought about it afterwards, and I do actually regret saying that, it wasn't a cool thing to say from stage.
Dan: Yeah, it was fucking stupid.
Tim: Reflection is good.
Dan: For ages, we never really understood what the band was about. Over a car ride from Melbourne the three of us had this slow realization just by talking out our experiences with toxic masculinity. There'd been this guy in the front row at our Geelong gig who was fist pumping, taking up all the space for three metres in front of the stage, grabbed a girl, put his arm around her and dragged her to be with him, like being a little too rough. He fucked up the show for everyone.
Tim: None of us could pin down the words for why we hated that guy. What he was doing was so repulsive and disgusting to me, yet his reasons for doing it, I had to admit, were probably the same things powering some of the ways that I still act myself. All three of us were talking about how often we had been called homophobic slurs growing up, how three men who don't all necessarily identify as queer can't find that personally offensive but are figuring out what it means that when it is used against us.

MRR: We should be able to write lyrics from a range of perspectives, even those we disagree with, because punk lyrics are not op-eds, right? Let's talk about your song "Gary Glitter's Eyes" an Adverts pun gone too far, or an attempt to trivialize and thus de-fang the unspeakable? Does it work?
Dan: There is a potency to the story of Gary Glitter, for me. I read about it when I was a kid, and the idea of a famous person being a child molester totally blew my mind, I thought of famous people as being untouchable, in a different realm to regular folks. So the idea that they had a private, unknown life, *especially* one that's so reprehensible was totally shocking to me as a ten-year-old.

MRR: I mean he, and so many of the '70s pop and radio stars who've since been outed as predators were also explicitly marketed to kids, right?
Dan: It's just wild to me how no one talks about him anymore.
Tim: There are people who somehow still openly enjoy his music, too!

MRR: Well you've also chosen to immortalize his name in your own song, so what was the rationale?
Tim: That song is about asking people to see the world through someone else's eyes, and the places that can lead. Anyone you walk past on the street could be having very sinister thoughts...

MRR: As in, someone who is sexually attracted to or wants to abuse children?
Dan: I feel empathy for those people, in a way. Like that's the worst possible impulse you could have and they don't have a choice in it.

MRR: They do choose whether or not to act on that impulse, and most sexual abuse of children is less about attraction than abuse of power.
Dan: What a curse to have to live with though, I can't imagine how you would navigate that?

MRR: Of course, plus people who are abused as children live with and navigate something far worse.
Tim: Definitely! I was trying to shift someone's perspective into that space, invite them to empathize with a stranger and then shroud it with the reality of the darkness that comes with taking that risk and you end up with children's body parts in a basement, so disgusted and mortified. It is a clever thing to do. It's also a stupid and dangerous thing to do in a song, but works as a way to confront those grey areas. Tim and the Boys as three white men can't make music where we have a concrete vision of what the world should be, because that would reflect the kind of certainty that has made the world we live in so exclusionary.

MRR: So you accept the risk in that? While it would be easy to write a song saying "child abuse is bad," adopting the predator as narrator is a pretty sensationalist mode. There's an assumption of empathy when you take on someone's voice. I do think contemporary punk has a bit of a problem with a presumption that singing about any subject matter is to endorse it as part of the world view of the band. Also,

someone might rock up to the gig not ready to think about child abuse.
Tim: I mean, they don't have to think about any of our songs if they don't want to.

MRR: They kind of do if someone's on stage singing a child abuser's name or saying "this song's about rape!"
Tim: It's interesting because "Gary Glitter's Eyes" has had the most play on [Sydney community radio station] FBI because it has a damn hooky bassline and chorus. I'm fascinated by the idea that people hear a song which sounds like that and assume it must be about something wholesome because it's being marketed to them. We've not got the ability to be Schoenberg and make music outside Western tonalism or structures, but we can make a pop song and put socially unacceptable ideas in there, to see if people will just enjoy it, or question it.

MRR: Right, like, no one's said "I'm not playing a song about a paedophile on the radio."
Tim: I wanna destroy the idea of what pop music should be but... that's way too audacious a statement!

MRR: Who do consider your band peers in Sydney?
Dan: Any of our friend's bands.

MRR: So it's just a mate-ocracy is it?
Tim: We share ideas too! Like when I heard the Basic Human demo, I was like, "Yes, this makes total sense" whereas someone from Melbourne would be like "what the fuck?" It's shocking that anyone not in Sydney would have a reference for it. I am amazed when someone from France messages us and says "we love your music." Then they say Ausmuteants, which seems so weird. To be fair we did rip them off in one song.
Dan: Also Spike Vincent is my favourite Sydney group.
Tim: He is classically Australian, like watching *Neighbours* and listening to Goanna at the same time. It's not ugly, very touching and climactic.

MRR: To switch gears slightly, but given that we're thinking about morality and ethics already: I wanna get into the role of faith in today's DIY punk universe. I got into music just after a time in hardcore where conversion to Hare Krishna was extremely on trend, and a few years later, it became super cool to signal atheism really aggressively and be overtly anti-God in all forms. These days, I notice religious faith is not really part of the contemporary DIY community conversation much anymore, even if not everyone's cottoned onto ways in which it was often racially exclusionary. It feels like now there are modes of social excommunication in punk that get enforced in similar ways to some religious groups and run totally counter to like actually addressing harm. Do you think your upbringing in and around the religious cultures of Judaism and the Jehovah's Witnesses respectively has affected your moral worldview as adults?
Dan: I have personally experienced that atheism thing. I was talking about my upbringing at a gig, and these two older guys were just super dismissive of me, like "all religion sucks."

MRR: Would you say you've experienced anti-semitism in punk and hardcore?
Dan: Dude. All the time. I don't bring it up because I know people aren't going to want to talk about it, or that they'll judge me, or think about me differently, so I just had to remove that part of who I am. I've had majorly negative responses. It's terrible that I can't talk about a big part of myself. Sometimes it'll be outright racist, you know, you're "this" or "that." Sometimes it can be subtler, like being with friends walking to the pub recently and I made a mention of a holiday I was celebrating, and it was just totally snubbed, people just shut down and wouldn't give me anything back, like that was not welcome to bring up this fairly major thing for me that I'm in the middle of!

MRR: I feel like now more than ever in punk and radical spaces we have these puritanical ideas of who is in vs. out, you know, "you fucked up and now you must burn," but in the contexts where it would actually be advantageous to for those with some power to say "OK, last chance used up, no more" it seems like it's *then* when people decide to access their endless wells of nuance and forgiveness. It can be so arse-backwards!
Tim: When is enough really enough? How do you navigate a person? It feels pretty case by case. There are no simple answers. There are people I can't access or observe if they've changed for the better because they got pushed out. To draw the religious comparison: my parents have no idea what I do with my life. They do not know my day-to-day. Swearing would really upset them. They don't know if I am celebrating birthdays, celebrating Christmas. I won't rub it in their face. They know I don't go to church, and they won't forgive me for what I have done until I start acting exactly the way they would like. To them, I now act in a way that is permissible enough that they can hang around me, but I have relatives who they won't even talk to. When people talk about "excommunicating" someone from the scene, I'm like, oh, have I joined another cult? Another niche religion? Punk has more rules than the Jehovah's Witnesses and even less members.

MRR: No crucifixes or camo for the Witnesses though, right?!
Tim: Camo's fine to wear but they're really against the military. It's funny because exactly what attracted me to punk are the values that Witnesses have as as one of the strangest Christian religions. Jehovah's Witnesses hate nationalism, won't vote, think politics is "bad," encourage you to help people. I feel like my parents taught me to be a communist as much as they taught me to be a Jehovah's Witness. I crossed from one extreme to another and have that understanding of these comparisons, but there are things I have experienced personally that I would hope that nobody who goes to shows ever has to go through.
Dan: I don't feel like it's even my place to decide who is excommunicated.

MRR: Trouble is that if no one ever does make that call, those who are victimized can feel like they are the ones who get excommunicated in practice because it's literally not safe, when it has signaled by inaction than that behavior is fine. Tim explained that the Witnesses having a very formal almost like HR or workplace-style process for excommunication seems different to the little I know about some segments of orthodox Judaism where the shunning over, for example, coming out as queer or trans, would be done in a more informal, socially enforced method; "we don't talk to that person," which is more like punk does it, right? Social isolation of an abuser is obviously the complete opposite in intent to shunning a queer child, but yeah.
Dan: I know what you're talking about. I had that with my mum. I was dating a guy when I was twenty, he stayed over my Mum called me the next day and said "Did he stay over last night?" which set off this chain of events of "I don't want you living here." It was tough for her too, she didn't know she'd feel that way, it wasn't just this religious thing but kind of an "you cannot do that under my roof" thing.
Tim: I grew up with rules but it never felt strict when I was a child. It was more like "you can't watch this movie" and then as we got older, it was more tutting and mild disapproval. That changed when I started dating. I found out so much about my parents.

MRR: Like their limits of what's acceptable?

Tim: More like how far they were willing to go to make me change my course of action. My dad told me I had to apologize to my grandmother that we wouldn't be in the afterlife together because I had been dating someone for two months. That side of someone is the ugliest side of a person you will ever, ever see, when you find out what they're willing to enforce their hard black line. I was taught that lying and aggression were sinful by my parents, and then suddenly they were committing those sins because my sin of having a girlfriend was worse? It just makes you question anything like that and be sceptical when it comes up. So much of our music exists in a weird "huh?" gray area because I have learned through all this that if you make things black and white, and tyrannical, you reduce the radical and liberated version of what we signed up for, into the same model of tyrannical thought. This is why we do try and keep people guessing and thinking.

Dan: I want to be really clear that none of what we do is about being edgelords. In our songs, we really aren't trying to exploit controversial topics for the sake of it. That is garbage. There is just something inside of me that is...not great. That thing is in all of us. I know in my own life I want to reflect on what I'm doing and who I am to become a better human, and part of that is exhibiting a range of this stuff in songs.

MRR: There is power in ambiguity...if you know how to wield it. The illusion of a simple very black and white right and wrong feels much safer because we exist in a fucked world where the basic boundaries we do have are constantly being pushed.

Tim: It's that intent and impact thing again. You said this to me in that sexual harassment training you did at my work: "If you have a head-on collision with a car, the cops don't ask you 'So where were you *trying* to get to?'"

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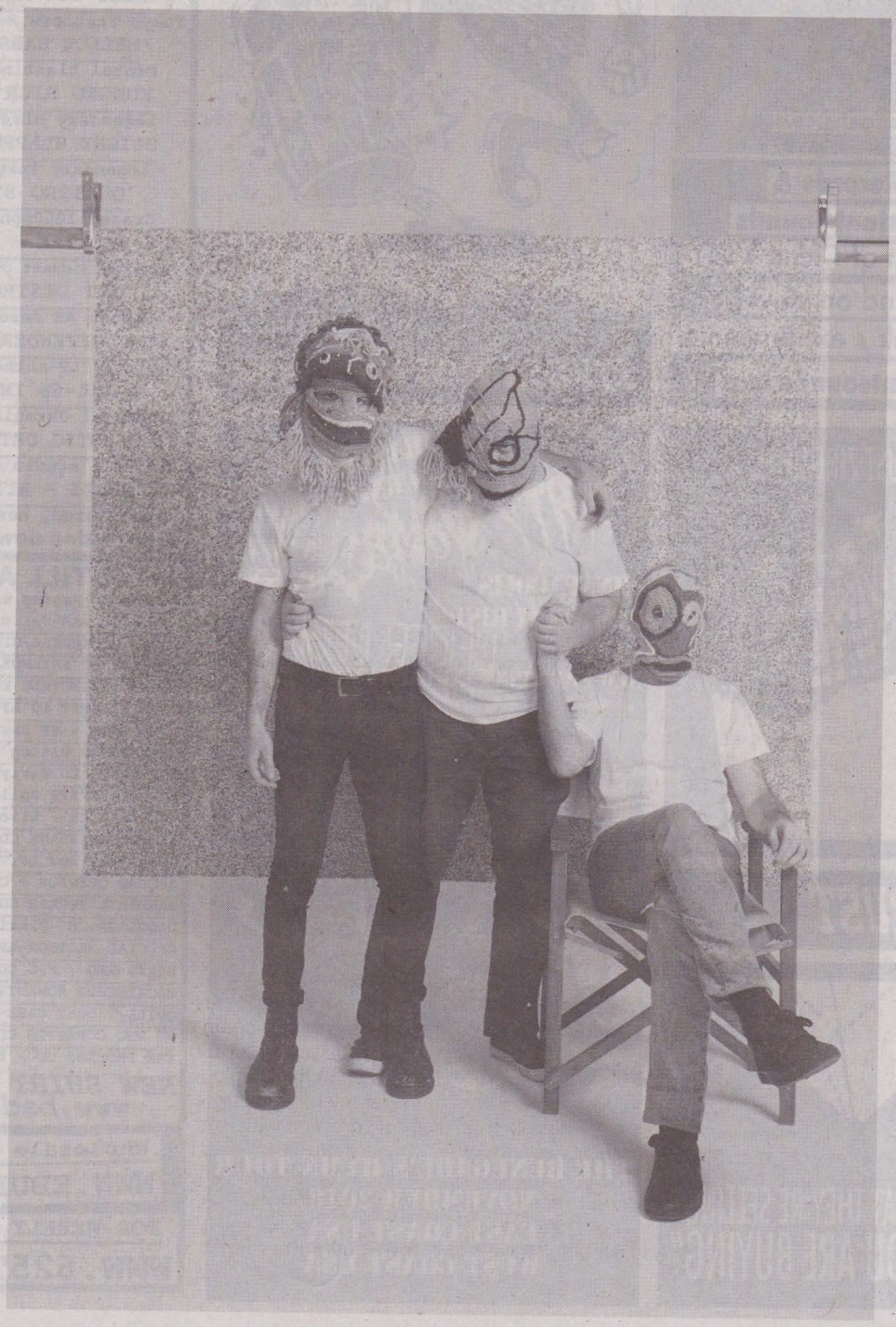

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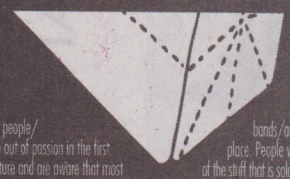

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HET WARD COLLECTIVE

Renovated Victorian houses in Pittsburgh don't change much, particularly not their basements. Layers of paint build up over decades, wooden stairs get replaced, leases expire. But the basement shows you can hear from the back yard are as driving and explosive as ever, the shows are still BYOB, the grass is still littered with cigarette butts, small crowds are still sardined together to be manically catharsized by the screaming freedom of rapid-fire three-minute hardcore songs punctuating the night.

But sitting down with Cecilia of Pittsburgh's Het Ward Collective, all we can talk about is what's different: what's changed and how it's enabled a small revolving group of hardcore musicians to own their corner of the scene and drawing a crowd of similarly-alienated queer punks. The music is hard as hell, but at Het Ward shows, men no longer own the scene, and that means everything.

Interview by Jayden Isadore Mu.

Photos by Em DeMarco and Matt Belvillian.

MRR: What experiences and feelings do you summon for *No One Is Ever Going To Tell Us How To Love Again*?

The Collective started as just a side project originally with myself, Rye, Justin. Eventually, after I was given the blessing from them to continue as a collective, a lot of the members who'd later go on to join at the time would be trans women and other trans femmes. It was never intentional that it would be as such, it just happened as the end result of of friends of ours stepping up and wanting to play these songs. Eventually, I decided I wanted to continue to center our experiences in our writing. Over time, from people emailing me and approaching me at shows, I started to see how much of an impact was resonating in the lives of other trans women. A lot of the newer content is more personal. It's about processing some trauma from my childhood and its conjunction to further repression. It hits on a variety of different topics: "More Than Ever" is a song about sexual assault and my experiences with feeling unsupported as a child from my family. "Peel Me" is in a nutshell a big *fuck you* to the shame and forms of misogyny that you experience growing up. Feeling defeated in your own way or beat back into the closet. And getting past that.

A lot of the newer songs are about experiences that I and a lot of other people close to me have had and the ways they overlap.

MRR: That's a lot of vulnerability to put into your art. How do you prepare to put yourself out there like that?
I try to focus on staying hydrated and fed. I don't like to practice the day of shows, that's something I've always been particular about. I eventually found solace in being more open with my traumatic experiences growing up, and found it helped others feel a sense of understanding reading my lyrics. So at this point, I'm much more comfortable putting myself out there to those who support us.

MRR: What music scenes did you grow up in?
A lot of earlier influences were late '80s New York hardcore bands. I grew up with that sound being prominent in bands I'd check out when I was growing up in Syracuse, NY in the earlier 2000s. I've always had an affinity for that style of music but at the same time felt detached and removed from the culture itself because it's so hyper-masculine and unwelcoming to queer folks and non-men. It always felt stifling. Syracuse punk and hardcore are a big part of who I am and the catalyst for a lot of important decisions I'd make regarding my own dreams and passions later in life, and I can't discount how much Syracuse punk and hardcore has played a role in that, and I'll always be grateful. But like any place it had its problems. The influence of violence of '90s hardcore bands in Syracuse trickled down, and there was rampant misogyny from cis white men at the shows—very much the case for hardcore pretty much all over the East Coast. In the early days of the band, I wanted to reclaim that sound for queers and non-men. Now I'm looking to expand beyond that with future writing.

In spite of the bullshit I witnessed over all the years, I was too in love with the music and the impact it had on my life to ever fully walk away from it. Eventually as I got older things kind of became less violent and got better. And the shows now make me feel like there's never been a better time to be a freak who loves heavy music. It's really refreshing, after having been going to punk and hardcore shows for over a decade now, to know that there's a network of us everywhere now. It's beautiful. Clearly it still matters to me, because here I am over a decade later still playing hardcore punk, a "somewhat-adjusted" transsexual at this point.

Our first full length, sound-wise, is influenced by '80s NY hardcore punk, like Gut Instinct, Raw Deal, and Outburst. There are some newer influences on an ethical level regarding how I want to carry myself in the world. I have to mention GLOSS and HIRS as examples too because... Why wouldn't I! *[laughter]* Non-men are taking over all forms of extreme music. There's more of us now than there ever have been.

> *"We're doing things we never thought possible."*

MRR: Good segue into my next question: do you see a lot of younger queer noise / hardcore bands and is their stuff different? Is it different from what you're performing now, or were performing at that age?
Oh my god, the bands that exist today are *much* better. The bands that are being started by people five to ten years younger than the crowd I grew up with have dialed into the sounds that we were ripping off. *[laughter]* My honest opinion on how hardcore and punk are doing things nowadays: the bands are better than they've ever been. They're tighter, more well-rehearsed, and not even just music-wise. The people who are five or ten years our junior are running circles around us in general. Seeing the way the youth is navigating their own spaces, and addressing interpersonal conflicts in their communities, and seeing how they're tying up the mistakes and loose ends that the people of older generations have made, is awesome and inspiring in and of itself to me to do better by them, my myself and by my friends much the same.

MRR: Can you give an example of that?
When I was going to shows seven years ago, it didn't happen that you'd see anyone reference a need to have safer or braver spaces. I'd never see on an event flyer "Hey, we do not tolerate racism, transphobia, sexism, ableism." When I try to explain this to people who are seven years younger than me now, y'know, they're shocked that people didn't have access to the information and resources that we do now. There's a lot to be said about the ability to access information and how rapidly that's changed and influenced growth and development.

But I have so much faith in these younger queers and the work that they're doing. I'm a big fan of bands like Transgression. Cloudgayzer are like, best fucking friends and one of the most important hardcore punk bands out right now. It's a really good time to be a freak in punk and hardcore.

MRR: Tell us about your first Pittsburgh gig as Het Ward Collective. How about your favorite?
So the first Pittsburgh show was at Dream Haus, it was January 2016 and we played with Homo Superior and Empathy Box. I was originally the bass player and we had two weeks to go before the show, and then I'm like, "all right folks, how about vocals?" We stare at each other and realized nope, none of us have practiced those. I knew something was gonna have to give and somebody was gonna have to learn them, so I put down the bass and proposed just singing. We only played four songs, and it was *so* fucking sloppy in the best way it could be. I had such a good time, and people were so into it and responded so well to that set. I was shocked. It was a very special moment, Het Ward taking its baby steps. Things are so much different now, but I just remember... it was really sloppy, at the end it was like "fuck, people saw that!" *[laughter]* We literally went from a side project practicing once a month, month and a half, to having regularly practices and tours, but that was our first. It was fun.

Favorite show is a hard one to pick! I'll pick a local, and one from the road. No wait, there are two from the road!

Honestly, gonna have to go with Blak Rapp Madusa and Medium Ugly at our record release at Roboto [Project]. We ended up doing an impromptu collaboration set with Blak Rapp Madusa, it was such a fucking powerful experience to be a part of, to have Melanie do that set with us and share our record release really meant a lot. I really love her, so look her up! Pittsburgh hip-hop. There were a bunch of other shows that night, but the turnout was still awesome, which also had me breathing a sigh of relief.

Okay, on the road. I'm gonna have to go with Pansyfest in

Asheville, NC last summer. We played a surprise set there, and it was absolutely wild. It was a room full of fifty or so queers that were leftover from the fest, absolutely losing their minds. I don't think I saw one person standing still during our set. It was just beautiful to look out and see a group of people singing along, being four states away from home. It shook me to the core in the best possible way.

Then there was the show we played in Columbia, SC with Danger Boy and Trauma Queen. It was wild—we played in a fucking shed. There was a knife lodged in the wood of the ceiling and we were all nervous and really wanted it removed so it didn't fall and stab someone during a set. For some reason I and a few others were too nervous to ask, but someone took it out eventually. I think Lilith? I forget who it was, but thank you! Our friends from Ashville traveled down. People were losing it, they were swinging off the rafters and climbing on each other and singing along. I think people disrobed at one point, too? It was memorable. I've never played in a shed before and I don't know if it's ever gonna happen again. *[laughter]* So those are my picks.

MRR: How do Pittsburgh shows differ from other PA shows or shows in other states?
God, Pittsburgh is a strange place, I absolutely fucking love it. For better or worse, it's such a lawless land for punk. If there's one thing I've learned in my time being involved in Pittsburgh hardcore and punk and DIY in general, there are a lot of people who will tell you that you have to adhere to a certain way of booking your shows, or you have to play a certain style of hardcore or punk to garner any kind of attention or have people appreciate it—and that's just bullshit. This really is the type of city where you can do whatever the fuck you want. Everything Het Ward Collective has done we've done against the norm for hardcore punk bands in Pittsburgh. We don't play bars locally unless they're all ages shows, we stick to all-ages venues. I mean what I say when I talk about how i facilitate our shows. We will not tolerate people who make marginalized people uncomfortable at one.

MRR: And you have. It warms my heart and it's something we will all miss about Het Ward Collective after you move on from the city. It's been a treat to be around the scene you've cultivated.
I tried to make the best of my time here. It's nice to know I'll be leaving a positive impact. I definitely ruffled some feathers, but... I don't trust anyone who hasn't made an enemy? *[laughter]*

MRR: What does Pittsburgh contribute to your creativity that your hometown didn't have?
I loved being exposed to all those awesome bands growing up in Syracuse, but I never ever for the life of me could get a band to last six months or a year, much less even consider touring. And that was where I grew up! When I moved to Pittsburgh it was a larger city and a larger music scene with more musicians and more access to places to play. I guess Pittsburgh had the travel resources that Syracuse didn't have—and had them for someone like me to access being a broke, low-income trans woman. I don't drive, and I can't afford to purchase a vehicle. Without access to one, I can't tour. Living in Pittsburgh, there's an option to rent touring vehicles through Dave Rosenstraus. Dave plays in Slip and Hounds of Hate. Used to play in Rambo. He is the reason why I've gone on the last six tours. I don't think I'd have been able to do any of the things I've done living in Pittsburgh without Dave. So shout out to him.

"There's never been a better time for freaks getting into heavy music."

Thank you for providing that resource and making it affordable to low-income folks who want to tour and have music that they want to share. It boils down to resources. There was a time I was a little more jaded about leaving Syracuse but at this point I've moved away from that bias. I could have gotten a lot of what I've gotten living in Pittsburgh in Syracuse too, but it would have been harder for me to find and obtain than it was to move here. Living in Pittsburgh gives me the means to do what I love and fulfill the dreams that I have, which are to tour the world and share my curmudgeonly-frustrated music with everyone.

MRR: That's fantastic, although I think you've still got some distance to go on "curmudgeonly." Final thoughts?
Thank you for taking the time to do this interview. I'd like to take a moment to thank you and to thank Rye and Justin, Medium Ugly, Alex from Get Better Records for being so supportive of everything we do, and Cloudgayzer. All of the non-men making music right now. It's amazing to be able to continue this Collective and know that it's resonated with people. I want to close by thanking you for filling us with so much inspiration and love and, speaking for myself, additional purpose for existence. All of our experiences are invaluable. You are valuable and loved.

hetwardpgh.bandcamp.com

Check out the current artists who inspire and conspire with Het Ward Collective!

Transgression: transgressionhc.bandcamp.com
Cloudgayzer: cloudgayzer.bandcamp.com
Blak Rapp Madusa: 1hood.org/artist/blak-rapp-m-a-d-u-s-a
Danger Boy: danger-boy.bandcamp.com
Trauma Queen: traumaxqueen.bandcamp.com
Medium Ugly: mediumugly.bandcamp.com/releases

YALLAPUNK

Interview and introduction by John Morrison. Photo by Lauren Freney.

Initially motivated by the persistent microaggressions and outright racism that too often come along with being a Brown woman in the music scene, Philadelphia based DJ, writer, and real-life super-heroine Rayna Fayez took it upon herself to create YallaPunk. Founded last year, the festival has the distinction of being the world's first punk festival centering MENA (Middle Eastern and North African)-led music and culture. Taking place across a robust, three-day arch of programming, the festival includes performances from HelloPsychaleppo, the Muslims, City of Djinn, and many more. YallaPunk 2018 transcends the conventions of the typical music festival by incorporating comedy, poetry, film screenings and a series of critical panels and workshops exploring race and identity. YallaPunk continues with its mission of building a rich and diverse community rooted in the enduring foundations of love, resistance, fellowship and community.

MRR: For starters, could you tell me exactly what YallaPunk is and what started you down this path specifically?
Rayna: There was a DJ in Philly, cis-het white dude, he's never had any experience with—as far as I could tell—with any Middle Eastern culture, does not speak Arabic, was not going to be playing Arabic music, and didn't have any Arab musicians lined up to help out. He decided to put random Arabic gibberish on a flyer for his party. I commented on the event like, "What the fuck is this supposed to mean?" He didn't respond, he deleted the comment so I commented again. "I see you deleting my comment!" *[laughter]*

MRR: Wow.
Rayna: So, he directly messages me and says "well, you know it's supposed to say my DJ night in Arabic..." "Well it doesn't, the letters aren't even connected, it's just gibberish." You gotta fix it or actually, just take it down. He says, "I'm going to send it to my translator in Lebanon... he's gonna fix it."

MRR: You got a translator for a DJ night?!? *[laughter]*
Rayna: He says. "I really care." No the fuck you don't, you don't care! So I ran into this dude at a Suzanne Ciani show and he asked me to get him a list of bands. I said "I'm not going to do the work for you. You're a DJ, it's your fucking job."

MRR: *[laughter]* Yeah, dig in the crates!
Rayna: So I ended up getting together a list of bands anyway and then I realized I have a pretty good list of bands and I'm like, "you know what, I'm going to book a fest." 'Cause that's how I know to fix things, I book a fest. That's what I did after the Virginia Tech shooting. I booked a lot of shows in Blacksburg, Virginia, the town where my family immigrated to when we moved to the United States, So I did that for about five or six years. So when the shooting happened, people felt safer walking around, there was foot traffic. CMJ style, SXSW style, people walk from one venue to another. I thought, "I want Black and Brown people walking around Fishtown enjoying this music, laughing, enjoying themselves, and having a good time. Just showing them who we are." The first year [of YallaPunk] was all volunteers, over 200 people came out the first year. It's not just the music, it's the workshops, the talks, the panels, there's poetry, comedy. (Aron Kader of Comedy Central's Axis of Evil tour performed last year). Honestly, it was an incredible time. It's nice to know that there are other people like me. I'm told that we're the first trans-affirming organization that focuses on Middle Eastern / North African arts.

MRR: I wanted to ask you, when I'm online seeing a lot of the verbiage associated with YallaPunk, I notice that the idea that community comes up a whole lot. This whole thing feels very necessary, like a thing that should exist.
Rayna: It's not just another music festival, right? So last year, around the time the Muslim ban happened, I was like, "I don't know if they're going to target legal immigrants, so I don't know if I'm gonna be around much longer." This needs to happen soon and now. Last year was a reaction to the political climate, and being reactionary isn't sustainable, right? We can't keep reacting, we need to create a community. As a community, we can undertake that emotional labor all together. Alone we are depleting our energies, our resources and power. Building a community is a lot more sustainable and creates a foundation for growth, for action and for...continuing to exist.

MRR: Thinking about that idea of acting, instead of reacting, It's productive, it's revolutionary and just on a basic entertainment level, you get fly music that way. *[laughter]*
Rayna: Yup! 100%, I agree. It's funny because every publication keeps asking me if this is a political event, but by the nature of our existence, wanting to exist is political. The reason has been that we've been politicized for years. We're not choosing to be political, we are political by existing.

MRR: Yeah, it's interesting because I think a lot about this kind of stuff and the nature of art and the nature of what we consider to be "political" art and I think the reason why, particularly in America, a lot of the white-dominated, if you wanna call it "Rock" music / guitar-based music is absent of spirit and feeling and purpose. It's because white people have taken on this idea that "...Y'all Black, Brown, and Yellow folks make music 'political,' but we just make art for art's sake!"
Rayna: Isn't that nice??? What a luxury!

MRR: Right? Mind you, it's political anyway. It just happens to serve the status quo because it's not rebelling against the way things are.
Rayna: Yeah, and it's exclusionary. So, I spent my teenage years in Southwest Virginia before I finally left for New York, and there weren't a lot of Black and Brown people in my hometown scene. I would go to basement shows and it was just my friend Will and I. My friend Will was Black, I was Brown, and then we'd spot the other people of color in the audience and just immediately want to be their friends, you know what I mean? But also some of them sometimes would have this reaction like "Oh, we can't congregate, too many of us. White people might get scared." *[laughter]*

MRR: *[Laughter]* Oh yeah, that's definitely a thing!
Rayna: So it's like two ends of the spectrum, right? You're not really sure how to act. You're overjoyed to see this other person at this show, and you want to bond with them, but you don't know if you're allowed to or if it's permissible yet.

MRR: And also, you don't know how they're going to react to it, cause there's a lot of that "peacocking" shit that goes on, like "Oh no, I'm *the one*."
Rayna: That's a thing! That's totally a thing! And I feel like some people really enjoy being tokenized and acting like cartoons of their culture or heritage for white people because it's a part of their *Art*. *[laughter]*

MRR: There's a lot of that shit going on, and it's held up as some avant-garde thing or some kind of "authentic" experience, but the shit is just tokenism.
Rayna: There's something that we've talked about when curating YallaPunk: we are battling the fetishization of our culture. If someone shows up and they're trying to act like a clown or become a cartoon of the culture, then that's not cool. We probably won't even book them. We have to be very intentional about the space that we create.

MRR: Could we get a little bit into the practical method of building YallaPunk 2018? A bit about what it was like building this festival up from the ground?
Rayna: Absolutely. I actually wanted to talk about crowdfunding for a second. This year will be our one-year anniversary as an organization, and we've applied for funding from a variety of organizations: funds that say they fund the arts, funds that say they fund social justice causes, non-profits, etc., but they don't really know where to place us. Some of them think "Oh, we've already funded our Arab organization for this year." They just don't know where to place us because we are so many things. That's what makes me really believe that we are one of a kind, there's no mold that we can just like, be plopped into. My favorite part of the festival, other than the music...I love everything, but the part that really makes people think is our workshops and our panel discussions. Last year, we had a panel on being tokenized, how to not be a novelty, and then we had a Queer identity panel that I thought was really important. This year, we actually have a a panel on Arab Supremacy and anti-Blackness in the Middle East, which is a huge thing.

MRR: Super necessary...
Rayna: People are like "Ooh, don't equate it to White Supremacy." It's not equal, but it's a problem that we have to acknowledge. And the education part [of the festival] is 100% free, because these are topics that people are worried about, nervous about. People might be like "I don't wanna spend money on something that's not fun. I don't want to be lectured at!" So, if you make it free, people have no excuse to not go. And sometimes you need people from your own community to check you, because they understand the context, you know?

MRR: That's so important, and having the educational piece behind it is so crucial. I remember reading about the Black Arts Movement, and Amiri Baraka was saying that they would have parties in Harlem, and the DJ would be playing music or they would have a band playing, and they'd stop the music and do a political poem or some political education...
Rayna: That's awesome!

MRR: You know what I'm saying? Kind of melding this very real cultural experience through the music with a political understanding and analysis that helps strengthen the culture and the people that are living it out. That kind of stuff is necessary.
Rayna: Absolutely. And redefining the narrative is very important because if we don't define our own narrative, we risk someone else defining it for us, and most times, it'll be something that we don't really agree with. How could the other people know? How could they understand where we come from? How could they understand the context?

MRR: Okay. Any closing thoughts you want to share? Tie a ribbon on it? *[laughter]*
Rayna: This is my dream community, and from what I've heard from other people, it is their dream community too, so come build it with us. Your input is very welcome, your participation is absolutely very welcome, and we'd love to have you. Please come be a part of our family.

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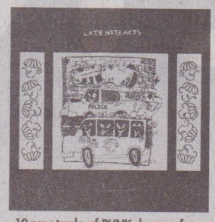

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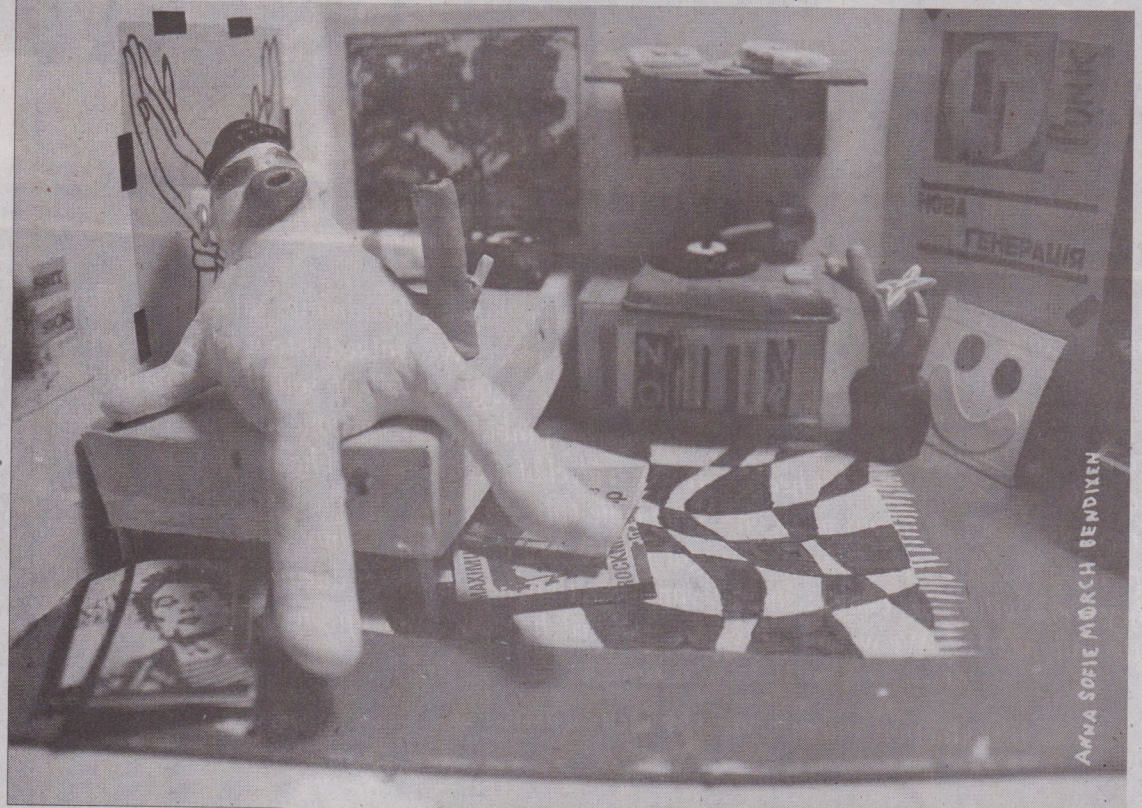

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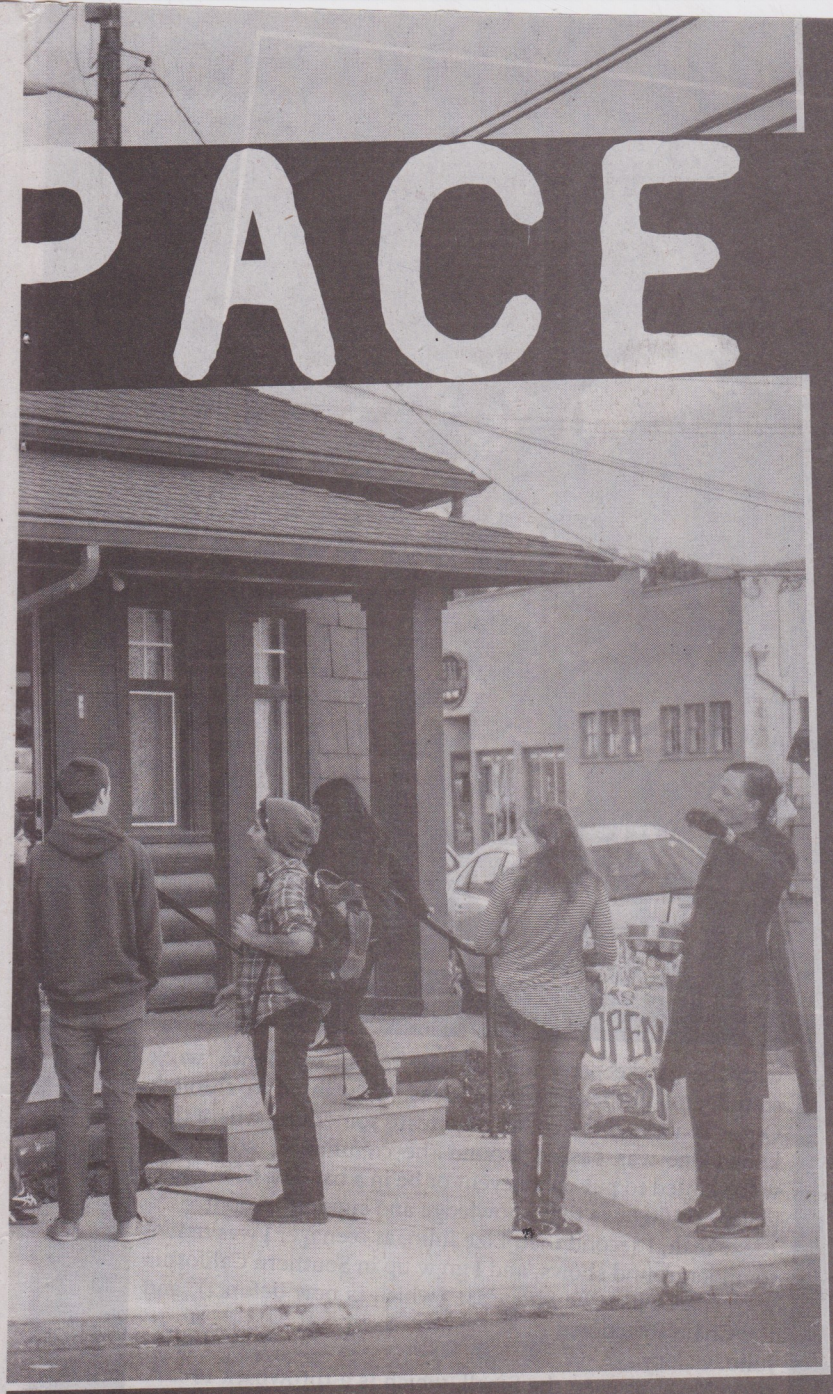
As anyone who's booked a tour on the West Coast knows, it isn't easy finding a good show between Portland and the Bay Area. Either you know someone in weed world off Interstate 5, or you buckle in for the longest drive of tour to Chico or Oakland. I had heard rumors of that punks in Arcata, CA (a halfway point on Highway 101) had opened a new all-ages show space, and felt lucky that they were willing to book a show there for my band in the fall of 2017. We weren't sure what to expect, but my bandmates and I were blown away by this place. We walked into a huge space with a comfortable stage, excellent sound, a zine library, records, art, pinball, and someone had cooked us food. It was a level of intentionality I hadn't experienced in a long time (plus, the show had a great turn-out and we got paid!) My bandmate Jimmy confided to us in the van later that he teared up during the show, because he realized he had given up on thinking spaces like

Introduction and interview by Vicky Cassis.



this existed anymore. We all agreed, and since then I've been talking up Arcata to anyone who's thinking about booking a West Coast tour. This interview is a tribute to people who are putting the time and energy into making space for punk music and art in their towns, for the people who live there and the people who need a place to play. Thank you, everyone involved with Outer Space! And to everyone else: visit Arcata!

Photos by Zev Smith-Danford.

MRR: Let's start by introducing what Outer Space is, and what are your roles there?

Zev: Outer Space is a DIT (Do It Together) all-ages arts and music community space. That's pretty good for a one-sentence explanation.

Alex: Yeah, and I'd add that it's a 501(c)(3) non-profit that is 100% volunteer-run, and that we actively strive to flatten power structure within our collective.

Julio: It's a pretty rad space with potential for a lot more rad stuff, really!

Zev: As for roles, they're quite undefined. I call myself a co-director and co-facilitator. I help with booking and volunteer coordination.

Alex: When prompted, or when I'm in a situation where—because I'm a femme woman—it would be advantageous for me to talk about my position in some way, I sometimes call myself the co-director. I usually shy away from that because it makes me feel icky. But yeah, I do volunteer coordination, and right now I'm the person who's bottomlining the community gallery space, and I also help facilitate the mental health support group that happens here every week.

Julio: I'm a core volunteer and collective member. I've been doing it for a while, and I perform there sometimes. I like to help out.

MRR: How did Outer Space start, and how did you all get involved in organizing it?

Alex. Hmm, why did it start...?

Julio: Because it needed to.

Zev: We were doing shows in our houses for a long time, which we had started doing out of the same need. We were feeling like the bands that we wanted to see and support at shows weren't getting shows that we felt comfortable at in Arcata. So we started putting them on. Eventually we felt and knew the need to have a space to do shows that was more long-lasting than a house. Houses we knew were getting the cops getting called, and many houses were getting shut down. To create something that was long-lasting was the driving force for creating Outer Space.

Alex: Yeah, I'd say it was definitely born out of a need. I'd say it was a personal need for Zev and I. We both came to this area at the same time about a year apart from each other, around 2010. At the time, there weren't any "legitimate" spaces you could go to for a show besides some things on campus. It was hard for me to find the underground, alternative house show scene here when I first moved up here and didn't know anyone. Actually, it took me longer than you'd think it break into that scene; it was like two years before I became aware of all that was going on here. And when I did come on the scene, I realized there were kinda, you know, the same things that happen in other places. You know, when scenes tend to be male-dominated, not very queer-friendly... it can be rough if you identify as a marginalized person in one way, let alone several ways. So, that was a thing. Then I met Zev, and we both enjoyed similar kinds of music, and we moved into a house together and both wanted to do stuff there. I think we very quickly realized we could be more curatorial with what kinds of shows

Sister Mantos

we chose to put on in our house. We started having more explicit conversations about who we wanted to book in our house and why. So, you know, not just a four- or five-piece straight, white, cis rock band or indie rock band.

Julio: Or reggae...

Alex: Yeah, or reggae, because there's a lot of that around here. Not that reggae's bad, but, you know, there's enough. So, yeah, there was a lot of pressure to do house shows. Anyone who's ever opened up their house in that way knows how stressful it is. So, we began to earnestly discuss having a legitimate space to do shows that wasn't a private residence. We started bringing in more people, like our friends, into what was the beginning of the Breakfast All Day Collective in its earliest iteration.

Julio: For me, I grew up in a place where there were all sorts of scenes going at all times. I grew up in Orange County. There was stuff happening all the time, good stuff and bad stuff. And there were places I could go to, like the Mexican Cultural Arts Center, and this place called SolArt, where a lot of local and traveling bands would come through and do cool stuff that might not fit the...I don't wanna say "mainstream," but the bigger wave of people out there. So, when I moved up here, I was really missing that. [Outer Space] is a spot where I can be a part of bringing that to other people who either like it, don't know about it, or want to do stuff that's more for their friends.

Zev: The only thing I would also add is that we had an issue with the gatekeeper-y idea of how to put on shows, work sound, and all these different ideas. We wanted to, through Outer Space and the collective, create something where that knowledge was passed around the community, so anyone who wanted to put on an event or be in a band or have an art gallery could have that knowledge and support to do it.

Alex: Yeah, I second that. Like Julio, as teenager I was drawn to underground shows, and I grew up in Southern California with spaces like the Showcase (which is now defunct), and the Chain Reaction...

Julio: Galaxy...

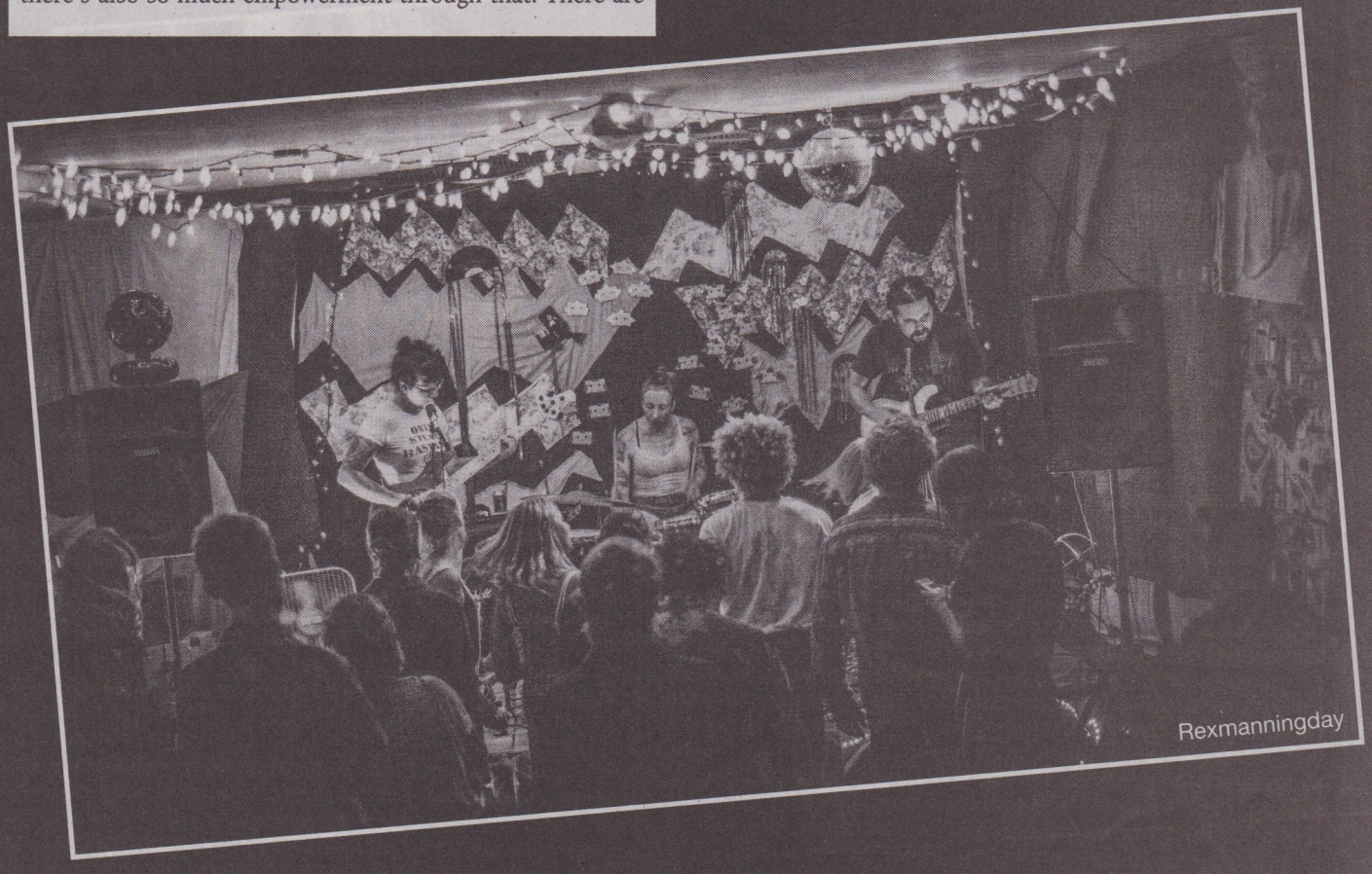
Alex: Yeah, or even the Smell, which is a throwback to L.A. But yeah, there were spaces. Riverside actually has an amazing underground art scene and still does. I came up here and was trying to find that, because I was like, "It's a college town! It definitely has some kind of thing!" But it wasn't really there. I had no experience putting on events; I had never set up a PA system or booked a band or anything. Zev had some experience in the Bay Area as a teenager, before they moved up here, but I had zero experience. It was really hard to get all that knowledge. The internet is a huge resource. You can just look up words from a booking agent if you don't know what they're talking about. It's all jargon, just industry jargon. If you're just, you know, some 20-something-year-old who's like, "I don't know what this means," it's hard to get answers. So, we want to share that hard-earned information with people. Some people helped us out, for sure, but it wasn't easy. And there's nothing special about us for being able to figure it out. It was just luck—

Julio: And hard work—

Alex: Yeah, and hard work, definitely—but we're just fucking lucky, and maybe a little dumb!
Zev: Well, that's the whole thing about the collective. It was a lot of knowledge sharing, encouragement, and energy put together.
Alex: I'd say we definitely tried to build a culture of mentorship and fostering the creativity and potential in each other. This can be a really lonely, isolating place, both geographically and psychologically. It's a pretty homogenous place on the surface. Like, there are people of color here, there are queer people here, there are trans people here, but on the surface this looks like a pretty white, rural, liberal-leaning hippie place. That can be lonely, and if you're already a weirdo who's interested in alternative art, and you're navigating a marginalized identity, it can be a real suck on your happiness sometimes. We try to be a place where people can feel support, both creatively and in a sense of community.

MRR: You must love Arcata to want to put the energy into making Outer Space. What is it about Arcata that makes you want to stay there and do this project?
Julio: *[laughter]* That's interesting... Since I found the Breakfast All Day Collective in Arcata...I was kinda open to just being with the collective, and since we found the building in Arcata, it just kind of worked out. Arcata is kind of a hub. Eureka's not too far away, which has a different feel than Arcata, and I don't really step into McKinleyville a lot unless I have to. Part of the facade of Arcata is that it's super friendly, but it's actually pretty cool when you do find the groups you connect with. For me, that's the point of it. Also, my kid started going to Arcata Elementary, so I figured we'd stay here.
Zev: One thing about Arcata is that, because it's so small, if you want something to happen here, you have to do it on your own. That's a lot of pressure, and really scary, but there's also so much empowerment through that. There are a lot of people who help encourage you if you want to try to do something here. Whether it succeeds or fails, there are people who want to put their time, effort, and maybe money to help make something happen, because this town has a really long history of art and music for many different bands and record labels, of people who used to live here—
Alex: Captain Beefheart died here!

MRR: ...Who?
Alex: Captain Beefheart! At Mad River Hospital! I'm a huge Beefhead, so that was significant in me deciding to come up here for school. Sorry, I had to interject. But yes, there's a rich history of artists and makers in this area.
Zev: Yeah, and a history of resistance and activism. I think, for a lot of people in the collective, we are still living in Arcata because of Outer Space. There's this sense of trying to create something that fills that void. A lot of people come up here for school, and they feel super isolated, and they don't have the access to resources that they had wherever they used to be. We try to fill that void for people and create that sense of community, that safe space for people to come and be who they are.
Alex: When you ask why are we still in Arcata, I just want to laugh and cry. So many times I'm just, like, up in the middle of the night being like, "What are you still doing here? You live so far away from all these people you love and care about! It's so difficult when you wanna see that art show at that gallery or that cool show in a city, you have to drive like six or eight hours!" It's really inconvenient, and sometimes I do just wanna throw my hands up and leave and feel like my life would be so much easier somewhere else. I would have so much more access to resources, art, and culture, and



cool, weird, alternative maker scenes. I could just go back to L.A., get some job doing whatever and go to shows that I'm not throwing. What a dream that would be! But then...this place is really beautiful, and this whole area is special and has a lot of power in it. This is all Wiyot land, and I feel really grateful to have been able to come here in my life's journey and do this healing and self-work that's been afforded to me. I'm really, really privileged. I love this place so deeply, and it's not perfect—no place is—and I feel like we've been given this opportunity to give back in some way. I see that it helps people. I'm finding fulfillment here doing this work, even though sometimes I'm tempted to go somewhere else where someone's already done this work and I could just passively appreciate it.

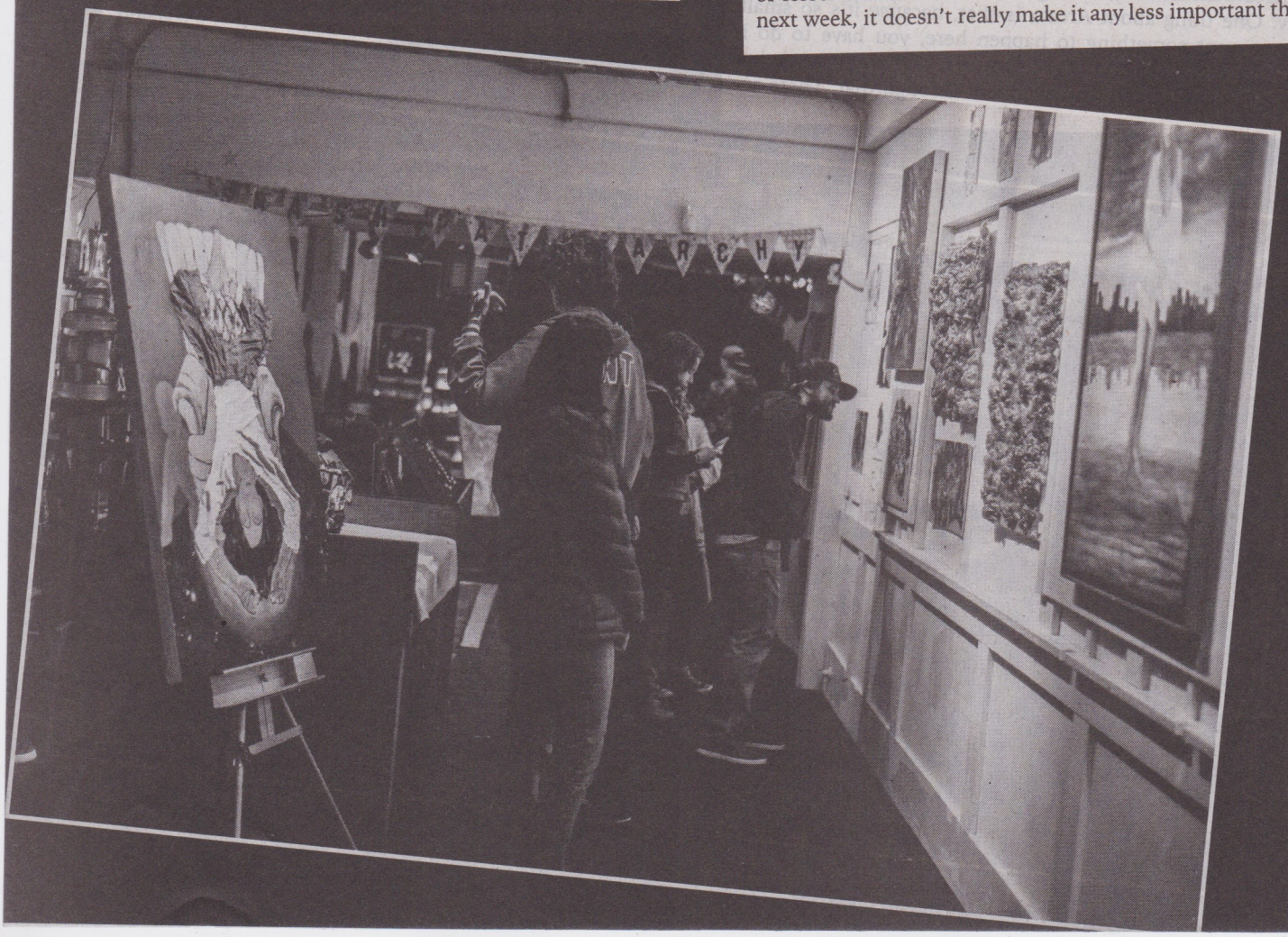
MRR: Is something that keeps you going the idea of Outer Space's future, without you? Someday, if you step down, you'll already have done the work of setting this up; the foundation will be laid for other people. Is the future community of Arcata something you're thinking about?

Zev: Yeah, that's definitely something we hope for, that we're given that knowledge to everyone and showing that this is possible if you just do it and put your time into it. We don't know what would happen if we were to completely step away. But to show that it's possible here, I feel like that's been a really big thing for this community. That if you just spend the time to do it, there's so much potential here.

Alex: Well, there's potential in people. Each person has their own unique skills and qualities that they bring to a project. Outer Space wouldn't have gotten to this point without every single person who has come into this project for any length of time.

Julio: For me, as someone who's been a part of the collective for a long time, [laying foundational work] has kinda been the spirit of it. That's where I'm at now, and that's why I'm doing it. I kind of envision myself doing the same thing wherever I might end up next. It's really inspiring and drives me a lot to keep doing it, because it gives me some sort of reassurance that people are down to do things for each other, to keep this kind of spot happening.

Alex: When Silent Barn [a DIY venue in NYC] went dark this past year, I was reading about it and I was sad because that space was really special to me. I was fortunate enough to be able to go and visit it, and it really was inspiring to see what people had created. You know, a DIY space that's existed for ten years? That's amazing! When I was reading about it, there was some quote—I'm going to misattribute it—that said, "That it happened at all is amazing and beautiful in and of itself." And that's pretty much how I feel about Outer Space. Like, will it exist if some of the people who are involved with it right now step away, or if their lives move in different directions? I don't know, but I also don't know if that matters very much. It exists now, in this point and time, and it's doing something now for the people who are involved with it, and that should be enough. And it is enough. For me, Outer Space has been a thing that takes a lot of time and energy in my life, but there have also been times where it was the thing that got me out of bed. Literally, because people were counting on me. So, it's there to function in that way for a lot of people's lives, to a greater or lesser extent. If it ceases to exist, you know, next year or next week, it doesn't really make it any less important that it



was happening now.
Julio: Well, hopefully it happens past the fest! *[laughter]*

MRR: Cool segue. What fest are you talking about?
Alex: Oh, the fest! We were like, "You know what's not enough, besides running a DIY space? We should throw a three day alternative music fest in three different locations! And we're gonna call it Lost Coast Fest, and we're gonna have 30+ bands from all over the country, as well as a lot of local artists, play some cool music that isn't reggae or EDM!" *[laughter]*
Julio: Which are cool, but not for this one!

MRR: How are you curating Lost Coast Fest, and why?
Alex: We're choosing music that is—in our humble opinions—very good. *[laughter]* Lost Coast Fest is slanting pretty heavily to be women, POC, trans, queer-heavy on the line-up, but we're not billing it that way because that's not explicitly what this fest is. The fest is a culmination of what we've tried to make Outer Space and the Breakfast All Day Collective be, which is recentering marginalized voices in the DIY scene.
Julio: It's a celebration!
Alex: Yeah, it's about celebrating, and partying, and having fun!
Zev: It's bringing together a lot of the people and bands that have played with us in the last six years and the local bands that have been really supportive of us (as well as some projects we've never worked with before!). It's curating something that's different from any other fest or large-scale event of any kind in Arcata. And it's catering much more to the youth and student populations, who often have very few things that they can get excited about.
Julio: Yeah, it's the all ages thing that we mentioned earlier, too. A lot of times for regular shows or fests, alcohol is a big draw and a big money-maker. This fest is about a lot of other things that matter.
Alex: Oh, yeah. A part of the fest that we're really stoked on is that, if things go well, we'll be able to make a donation to two really cool local non-profits. One is the Raven Project, which offers assistance to houseless, queer youth, and that's based out of Eureka.
Julio: The other is Centro del Pueblo, which is a grassroots organization that came out of the needs of the immigrant and undocumented communities in Humboldt county to have a group of people standing with them and fighting for their rights.
Alex: Some really cool work Centro del Pueblo has been doing this past year has been trying to make Humboldt County into a sanctuary county, which is a very good idea.
Julio: It's on the ballot!
Alex: For the record: I endorse it.

MRR: Damn, that's awesome. Is Lost Coast Fest going to be a music-only festival, or are there any other things you're trying to do in the time and space of having all these people together?
Alex: We're definitely trying to possibly have some workshops or panel discussions or things like that, which would happen during the day at different locations. It'll be a pretty stacked line-up each day, with about ten acts going on each day, so it would be a pretty quick transition into that. But hopefully we'll be able to have some more offerings during the day.
Zev: Yeah, and possibly different groups will be tabling. We'd love to have workshops and have a more critical-thinking to the fest. It depends on how much we can get done in these next less-than-two months.
Alex: That being said, if you (or someone you know) in giving a panel discussion or workshop on some fabulous idea we haven't thought of, get at us! At lostcoastfest@gmail.com.

MRR: Excellent plug. What are you hoping to say to the world about Arcata with Lost Coast Fest?
Alex: Arcata exists, and it's a very special place. A significant part of what makes this place so special are the people that live here. And that the stereotype of Humboldt County exists here, but there's so much more to this community than that flat one-dimensional caricature. There's a truly vibrant immigrant community here; there's a beautiful student population, with young people who are bright, hopeful for the future, and passionate about doing work to make the world a better place. That hope is an inspiration to me.
Zev: All of that beauty of people and ideas is happening in Arcata, along with natural beauty that surrounds us. Natural beauty is inherent in living here. Every single venue of the fest will be within about a mile of the Redwood Forest and four miles of the Pacific Ocean.
Alex: And a ten-minute walk to the marsh and Humboldt Bay!
Zev: So I think that highlighting the people and this place in one event will be a celebration of all of that.
Alex: Also, this fest will say that Arcata is like a lot of other places in this country where there's a really cool, alternative, DIY scene that exists because of the people who decide to be a part of that scene or community or whatever you want to call it. Arcata is really cool and you should come visit us!

MRR: What are some bands that are playing Lost Coast Fest that you're excited about?
Julio: I didn't get to see them last time they came, so I'm really excited to see Screaming Females.
Alex: Yeah, they're awesome!
Zev: I'm really excited for Spellling! People in Arcata haven't had a chance to hear about Spellling yet, and I'm excited for this town to experience that. They're based out of Oakland. And I'm super excited for Choked Up to be coming! It's pretty wild.
Alex: For me, I'm genuinely excited for everyone. It sounds corny, but I really am. It's almost like I had a hand in the curation of who was coming. I'm excited for Kitten Forever; I love to watch them play live, they're so cool. If you haven't seen Kitten Forever live, I very strongly suggest it. They're an amazing kinda-riot-grrl-inspired band from Minneapolis. Also, Terror Pigeon, currently from Nashville, who always does cool, weird stuff that challenges me, but is also high-energy and just makes me happy.
Julio: I'm excited to see Maya Songbird again. It'll be, like, the fourth time I've seen her do her thing. She was with Sister Spit, which was my introduction to her, and it's just so awesome. Really sexy, cool, stylistic

music that's really fun. And, of course, [your band] Rexmanningday... *[laughter]*

MRR: Oh, stop...
Alex: Like I was saying, some of these bands have played with us before, so it's always so lovely to welcome people back, to see how they're doing, and to hear how their sound is changing or growing, and to support people in their art in that way. I'm also really excited to welcome back Cuddle Formation. The last show Noah [of Cuddle Formation] did with us was actually one of our forest shows, that we do in the Arcata Community Forest. It's a public park of Redwood trees. I look forward to see what Noah will bring to the stage this time!

MRR: Hell yeah. Are there any more plugs you wanna give before we part?
Alex: Yeah! Wizard Apprentice is coming back on the 15th of September! Wizard Apprentice from the Bay and Julius Smack from L.A., an amazing tour package. I'd consider both of them to be experimental avant-garde artists. I love bringing artists like that into Outer Space, because I feel like giving people challenging stuff is good.

Zev: We're kind of not taking on as much in September because of the fest, but I think other people in the collective are planning things.
Alex: There are definitely the usual things going on, like Youth AA and the mental health support group, and other people are putting on some shows. But other than that, we're getting ready for Lost Coast Fest! See you there!

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Lost Coast Fest takes place at Outer Space on October 5, 6, & 7, 2018.

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CHAIN CULT

Dinos: guitars
Jason: bass, vocals
Vangelis: drums

Interview by Lydia Athanasopoulou.
Photos by Carlos Canales and Alex Sjoberg.

Chain Cult hail from Athens, Greece, a place that—weirdly enough—hasn't yet been completely saturated by post-punk bands. Despite Greece having had a vibrant post-punk and darkwave scene in the '80s, things have been mainly crust, punk and hardcore focused since the '90s and beyond. All members of past or present hardcore bands themselves, Chain Cult came together out of a mutual desire to play driving, urgent post-punk and—along with bands like Arhí tou Télous, Era of Fear, Cold i, I Want the Moon, and more—help bridge a sonic gap in their local punk scene. Given that we're all friends and that in just one year they've already released a demo tape, a LP and played K-Town festival—and hot on the heels of their extra-fresh EP Isolation*—I figured it was time to grab a couple beers together and pick their brains.*

MRR: How did you first get into punk, and what got you into DIY?

Jason: Well, I was more into black metal when I was younger. I was always into punk and hardcore but never so fanatically. Then at some point I heard crust and from there it made it easier to connect with other things. The aesthetic, to me at least, was something I liked and mixed well with black metal. So it was very easy for me to move to punk. I had gotten really tired of metal, the attitude, the way of life, so since then I've stuck with DIY, hardcore punk and everything related.

MRR: Did you feel black metal didn't really cover you?

Jason: It's always been like that; the people, the style, even though it has a lot in common and crossover with punk, making bands, putting on shows, things like that, it's a very different "packaging," it's very religious, without reason. And Satanism wasn't for me. I think it's stupid, I'm a total atheist. And there were people who were even far right, and again, I couldn't stand sharing a platform with them. I liked black metal musically, so crust brought me closer to hardcore and punk.

Dino: Very early, in junior high, I realized I couldn't connect with any of the people in my school, a private school in the north suburbs of Athens. So I started hanging out with out-of-school friends, cousins of friends from out of school who were already into punk, and that piqued my interest. In the beginning, all through school, I was just a listener, went to shows. Then I moved to Patras for studies and started to become more active, booking gigs, doing my own bands, writing zines.

MRR: So was it important for you to move from being a listener to a participant?

Dino: Yeah, it was a natural evolution, live gigs were the best part of the week for me!

Jason: He still lives for gigs!

Dino: Yes it's true, I'm a total gig-lover. Booking them, playing them and attending them—even a bad show, I'll go. So it was

natural, you start helping a bit, meeting bands and the people behind the scene, then you get more into things.
Vangelis: I have an older brother, I got into a lot of music through him. From there I found a couple compilations, the UK sound, then started getting into punk, Dead Kennedys, Ramones etc., all this at the tender age of 14. I started drums at the same time, and that sucked me in, listening to a lot of music and punk rock. Growing up downtown I also met a lot of people, traded tapes with friends, discovered the harder sound, UK82, some Greek punk. I started being active and playing in bands after eighteen. Even though I was going to shows since a teenager, I started playing more, with lots of bands, in some of them with my brother—and just because I'm a drummer, I'm in demand *[laughter]*. Then at times I was active in various collectives or helping friends at shows; I was part of the Villa Amalias concert team from 2009 to 2012, with various bandmates.
Jason: That's where I met you.

MRR: What's your involvement nowadays?
Vangelis: I was always in lots of bands so I was always somehow involved in shows and especially for solidarity gigs, benefit shows etc. I participated in the Studio Κολλεκτίβα Ήχου και Λόγου (Radical Sounds Collective studio) for ten years or so, a self-run DIY studio and practice space in Athens, but I also often help with drum turning and lessons, some technical knowhow, helping with recordings, productions—it's about exchanging knowledge and experiences with other people.
Jason: I help out at shows. I also drive some bands around. With one of my older bands we were also at Κολλεκτίβα Ήχου και Λόγου studio.
Dino: As friends and scene supporters, we also did two amazing shows with Antimob, Gutter and Dirty Wombs in June 2012 and 2013 in the middle of downtown Athens. It was on a pedestrian street, on a big crossroad, a bit like Chaos a Grácia in Barcelona. There were so many people, it was an amazing time.
Jason: It was a guerrilla show. We set up, played for two or so hours, and were done.
Dino: I used to help for years at the Prokat35 squat in Patras, booking local and foreign bands, hosting bands. We also did some shows at Parártima with other groups in Patras, we had a basement where bands shared rent and rehearsed, we also recorded in self-run studios. I started a zine (*Winterview*), which theoretically isn't dead but I haven't written for it in a while. Now I've moved back to Athens, I'm part of a booking collective, Distort Reality, but here I haven't yet fully immersed myself, to book shows regularly like in Patras, where it was like, if I don't do it myself no one will. So now here I'm a bit more comfortable because there are shows every week. And I can do other things, like showing bands around, driving to the airport.

MRR: You've all played in hardcore bands before. What made you turn post-punk?
Jason: There wasn't really a band with this specific sound at the time and we all wanted to play something different.
Vangelis: As far as the sound, we don't want it to be so dark. We like it to be more straight, more direct. We like death rock bands and post-punk, but we try to keep the punk element strong.
Dino: We've all been listening to post-punk for a decade or so, parallel to hardcore, and it was always in the back of our head to do a post-punk band. We like mid-tempo, but we are more energetic. We don't wanna be darkwave, like Dracula darkwave style.

MRR: Is it important for you with this band to remain a part of the political punk scene in Athens?
Jason: We're part of a specific scene, a distinct scene. We don't play at clubs, we play at specific spaces with a specific political stance, no fascists allowed etc.
Vangelis: As Chain Cult it's clear. We didn't need to discuss any of the politics around it, we share experiences, a scene, we're friends, we've done so much together.
Dino: And even though we played in other bands before, the change in style doesn't change who we are. The political identity remains the same, we're just exploring a new sound; I think that shows in the way we do things...
Jason: ...and the reasons we do things the way we do...
Dino: ...and what we take part in, like the compilation for the support of the White Helmets in Syria. It's a collection of post-punk groups from all over the globe organized by two Danish labels and they have already put out one comp and this is the second one. They asked for a song, we gave them a track from our demo.

MRR: Tell me about your demo.
Jason: We sent our demo to a bunch of labels once the tape was out, 150 copies. It sold out. And Dino insisted we send it to Paco at La Vida Es Un Mus, who liked it and released it on LP.
Dino: We didn't think the demo would sell out! I admit I didn't expect it, but I insisted on sending the tape to La Vida Es Un Mus—I said have patience. And we have a new EP now, *Isolated,* also on La Vida Es Un Mus that just a came out, a single with two tracks. The record was available at K-Town fest, where we just played and had a lot of fun! We have lots of shows planned to support these two releases, but we're already working on new material.

MRR: And Jason, you sing in English. How come?
Jason: I don't know. I suggested Greek for the future. It just didn't come out.
Dino: Right now I can't imagine it in another language, but I'm open of course. The Greek language sounds very different. But we filter our ideas and influences very well, and we like what each person brings to the band.
Vangelis: About the lyrics—it all comes from all three of us. As the music does, because we have a lot of common influences in sound and aesthetic.

MRR: How do you see the post-punk scene in Greece right now?
Dino: Greece used to have an amazing post-punk / darkwave scene back in the '80s, but for some reason it never got updated. We still play the same legendary tracks of the '80s at parties and underground nightclubs. It's time to change this, and yes, welcome more post-punk / darkwave bands in the DIY scene. For us, along with crust and hardcore, we always listened to post-punk, the original and the revival of the 2000s abroad, and it all came together.
Jason: If it exists, in a broader sense, it's in another scene, not DIY. Expect for a couple bands maybe, there isn't much post-punk here. In the '90s and until the 2000s there were very few bands playing post-punk in DIY. Archí tou Télous, for whom Vangelis also drums, have been playing since the 2000s, but they're an exception.
Vangelis: On the other hand, crust never really stopped here! Greece still has a big crust crowd. In comparison to Spain, for example, where a lot of crust bands played in the 2000s, but not anymore, here we've had a long crust and metallic hardcore tradition, then crust, neo-crust, and it still holds strong.
Jason: Yeah, crust and D-beat are very strong here.

MRR: It's important that you're friends. Your connection shows on stage.
Jason: And you gotta have fun. It's important to us, because we wanna do certain things, like go on tour, play shows—if you're not with friends to share that experience and have fun together then there's no point. It's not about money, it's about gaining experiences.

MRR: Greece has a few difficulties when it comes to touring: geography, network, money etc. What do you think?
Dino: We are a bit far, there are some tactical difficulties, but it used to be more difficult. Ever since a few bands did it, more bands saw it's possible and they also went.
Jason: If you want to do it, you'll do it. The cost isn't that high, you might lose some money, but it's doable.
Vangelis: We've been on tour in the past for two weeks with Lifewreck and Dirty Wombs, took the boat to Italy, the other classic route to get to Europe with a van. But yeah, there are more contacts nowadays with people abroad, and the internet obviously helps.
Dino: Also, some friends of the scene have bought their own vans, which is a really big step. If you don't have one, you gotta rent, and that's a lot of money, and rental companies don't like the idea of a touring band. Also, another problem is that in recent years, with the crisis, it's really hard to leave a job to go on tour, and with this band I'm happy because touring is something we all wanna do.
Jason: And what Vangelis is saying is important—building relationships, bands coming here, you go abroad, you connect, people invite you, mutual ties are made. Maybe that wasn't so easy in the past. With Chain Cult it's a conscious goal; if you can't do it, then let's not bother.

MRR: Some great bands have played here recently, good shows too. The scene has kind of renewed itself.
Dino: We're lucky we have places to book shows, we have equipment, we have lots of people attending!
Vangelis: Shows are almost always packed, we know we don't have to wait for some big fest to see a good band with lots of people.
Dino: These people aren't always punk, though—because the scene is connected to the political scene, we also have political people who come support shows. If it were just punks we'd be less people. But that's the beauty of it, it's a mix of people. There are some negatives of course...
Jason: People don't always understand the work you've put into it, that they have to contribute, that maybe you're losing money.

MRR: Is there something you'd like to change here?
Vangelis: What's important to me is that the infrastructure can support things without all of it always falling on just a few people who feel like working hard. That's something I like about abroad. You wanna play a show? Then support the space that houses it. Help and support the people who do these things. Help at the bar, work the door, help with setting up and collecting gear—take on the responsibility. You can't expect a small core of people to go for a whole season on their own every weekend, because after a couple years they'll burn out. And there are time limitations there too. Don't just have one sound person and everyone else drink at the bar; have a circulating team so that people can do shows they enjoy too—not having to do every pop punk and grind band that comes through. Making the bands be half-responsible for the shows, inspiring them to be a sub-group that will take on something. People come to the meetings and talk the big talk and then it's still the same five people doing all the shows every weekend.
Jason: I'd like more active involvement, whatever anyone has to offer. But hasn't it always been that way? For example, I'm not an organizer; I know my limits. I won't promise something I can't deliver. I'm also not gonna take anyone by the hand and make them do something they don't want to. So it's up to each person to do their part.
Vangelis: For me it's very important. You don't have to do everything, but you wanna play a show? OK, help put up the posters, something simple. Because if you don't put up posters, people won't come, and the space is negative affected. And it ends up being a mediocre band and their fifteen friends.

MRR: Plug and play bands.
Vangelis: Infrastructure and systematizing it so people can refresh, because I think this can also enchant people and show them how fun it is to be actively involved, doing things with others—and seeing a good band, too!
Dino: I'd like more bands and more bands that take it a bit more seriously, work a little harder. I'm not saying they need to be super ambitious, there are many angles, but I'd like bands that do it not just because they like playing, but because they have a vision, somewhere they want go. We did a punk picnic with Distort Reality and were looking for local bands, and we didn't want bands that just play, but that play good music well. There are a lot of half-arsed bands.
Jason: Yeah, but sometimes that's just what people wanna do. Drink beer and play shitty punk for an hour and a half.
Dino: Well, 90% of the bands I listen to are from abroad. I'd like that to change a bit. I like to pay attention to my sound, I won't write a riff in ten minutes or a song in ten minutes. We're also not gonna hyper-analyze it; we're not writing a symphony. But a balance between simplicity and analysis is good, I think.

MRR: What is your life like outside the band? Do you lead double lives?
Jason: Not for me. I work for myself, I'm part of an Athens microbrewery called Noctua, I run it with another three friends. I chose to do this so I can be my own boss. I expressed myself at my previous job [as a journalist] but I prefer to have my freedom and work for myself.
Dino: I don't think it's easy having a double life. Sometimes you have to, but I don't think it's ideal. Right now I'm kind of unemployed by choice. I don't have a lot of back-ups, but I'm happy with few things because I can't really imagine myself making compromises. Not just the kind of job I'd do but the amount of time I'd spend. I can't imagine my life without a band, touring, booking shows. I'm trying to balance it out, obviously I won't starve myself for punk, just figuring things out right now.
Vangelis: I've been working here and there in various jobs and giving some drum lessons. I wouldn't call it a double life, but I kept some of my bands a bit more discreet. Especially during certain periods when I played at a lot of squats and things, I didn't always tell everyone what kind of music or bands I play in. With some of the accessible or free improv stuff I do, I can show a video and say "that's what I do," but with some people, they just won't get it.

MRR: Yeh, with some people I just say "rock music."
Vangelis: *[laughter]* Yeah, "fast rock music!"

MRR: Future plans?
Jason: So we're going to Spain at the beginning of September for three shows; Barcelona, Bilbao, and Zaragoza for a festival. Then we're going around the Balkans and Central Europe for 12 days with Skotodíni from Ioánnina. They're a very good band, young kids, like 20 or so years old.
Dino: And the big plan is for 2019, to tour Germany and the UK with a new record. We get emails from those countries, people order shirts, they suggest booking shows for us. We just wanna do as many shows as possible, where available, go as far as possible.

chaincult.bandcamp.com
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UPCOMING TOUR DATES

THU. 09.06 – Barcelona (ES), Meteoro
FRI. 09.07 – Bilbao (ES), Shake Bilbao
SAT. 09.08 – Zaragoza (ES), Sida Fest

Tour with ΣΚΟΤΟΔΙΝΗ / SKOTODÍNI (GR):
TUE. 09.25 – Sofia (BG), Fabrika Avtonomia
WED. 09.26 – Bucharest (RO), Macaz
THU. 09.27 – Cluj-Napoca (RO), Urania
FRI. 09.28 – Budapest (HU), Aurora
SAT. 09.29 – Vienna (AT), Venster 99
SUN. 09.30 – TBA
MON. 10.01 – Graz (AT), TBA
TUE. 10.02 – Ljubljana (SI), Jalla Jalla-Metelkova
WED. 10.03 – Zagreb (HR), Mocvara
THU. 10.04 – Belgrade (SR), MKC Kombinat
FRI. 10.05 – Skopje (MK), TBA
SAT. 10.06 – Thessaloniki (GR), Steki sto Viologiko

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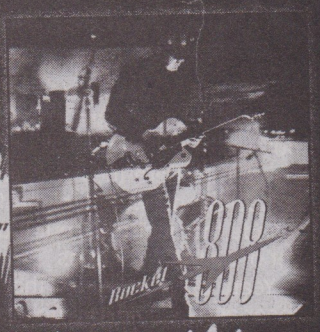

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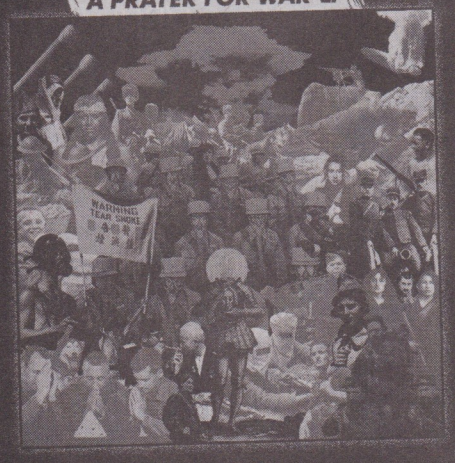

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MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

We are always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let us know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. We will go see it.

I walked out of **BlacKkKlansman** in despair. All I could think is it is never going to get better. History keeps repeating itself and no one is learning. People are getting stupider. We have a racist jackass as our president. Why can't this country change?

It wasn't really the movie that made me feel that way. **BlacKkKlansman** is a bit too Hollywood. It has what could be qualified as a happy ending. But director Spike Lee tacked on some actual footage of the 2017 Charlottesville rally, which is brutal to watch. Then there is the racist in chief defending the neo-nazis and that car slowly backing up after running down the protesters. I left the theater thinking nothing's ever going to change and my friend reminds me that after Charlottesville every time the white supremacists show up in a city for a rally they are met with a crowd much bigger than the size of theirs, which I guess is something. Still, as **BlacKkKlansman** points out, these things usually happen behind closed doors. The neo-nazis showed up in the Bay Area again this past month.

There was a preview for the new Michael Moore film **Fahrenheit 11/9** before **BlacKkKlansman.** There was one clip where an older white guy says that if Trump gets impeached the violence will be way worse than it is now. He said it nonchalantly, not as a threat. Then I remember how Lee said he was in Martha's Vineyard when the march in Charlottesville happened. Nothing really makes sense anymore.

BlacKkKlansman is the "based on the true story" account of an African American police officer, Ron Stallworth, who in the '70s infiltrates the Colorado Springs chapter of the KKK. Stallworth answers an ad in the newspaper to join what they call "The Organization." Over the phone, he talks a good game and is invited to meet the group. He obviously cannot go himself, so he sends another detective to play him in person.

The story of **BlacKkKlansman** is rather basic. It is the little flourishes and contradictions that bring that story to life. Lee uses Hollywood's past with **Birth Of A Nation** and **Gone With The Wind** with their racist tones along with Blacksploitation films combined with the stories of the citizens of Colorado Springs trying to find their place in the country. The ultimate contradiction is why the investigation is shut down. It is not because the problem has been solved. It is because there is no longer funding for it. The people in charge do not care if the problem goes away. Which brings us back to what is going on in 2018. (focus features.com/blackkklansman)

If you were to think of an '80s music festival, Live Aid is probably the one that comes to mind. Have you heard of its precursor, the US Festival? If you haven't, **The US Festival: 1982 The US Generation** is here to tell the story. Apple's Steve Wozniak decides to put on a giant music festival. He has no idea how to do it, but since he has "more money than he needs," which he reminds us many times in the film, he feels it is a possibility.

As with most things in life, money does make it happen. Surprisingly, Wozniak's dedication to the idea is what spurs it along. He finds the location, a big empty field in San Bernadino, California. He hires San Francisco music promoter Bill Graham and his crew to run the show. When Graham's staff comes to scout the location, they have numerous complaints. Wozniak hires a crew who bulldozes the area to create a perfect amphitheater. Graham's staff can hardly believe it. Look what money can do.

Wozniak pictures the US Festival as correcting all the mistakes of Woodstock. There are plenty of port-a-potties, water is available, things are organized. Even the bands are happy. It's the biggest crowds they've ever played to and they are getting paid the most money they've ever received. Win win. Aside from the festival happening in the heat of the Southern Californian desert over Labor Day weekend, everything runs smoothly.

Some of the bands who performed at the US Festival are the Police, the Kinks, B-52's, the Cars, Gang Of Four, Talking Heads, Grateful Dead. It was quite a hodgepodge. Humorously, it seems Wozniak picked the bands himself. He included the guy who performed at his wedding, Joe Sharino, and Jimmy Buffet. Strangely, the band stuff is the less interesting aspect. The execution of the festival along with Wozniak and Graham butting heads is much more enjoyable. (icontvmusic.com)

If you like hearing about the logistics of music festivals, you will also like hearing musicians talk about records. **Records Collecting Dust II** is volume number two of the series. The first one, which I also reviewed in this column, focused on West Coast musicians. **Records Collecting Dust II** focuses on hardcore punks from Boston, New York, and DC.

I know what **Records Collecting Dust II** is attempting. Music is important to me. I have more records than any sane person should have. People in some of our favorite bands should have something interesting to say about their favorite records. And they do. It just isn't that much more interesting than hanging out with your friends and talking about records.

Featured in **Records Collecting Dust II** are Clint Conley, Ian MacKaye, Amy Pickering, Al Quint, Pete Stahl, Jon Sox, J Robbins, Brian Baker, Page Hamilton, Cynthia Connolly, Clif Hanger, Choke, Jon Joseph, and many more. I started finding our on-the-couch banter to be more interesting than the movie. I jokingly suggested they should be filming us watching this film. Maybe for **Records Collecting Dust III**? (recordscollectingdust.com)

The ingenuity of the B-movie filmmaker rarely gets the credit it deserves. People now acknowledge Roger Corman's contributions, particularly because he launched the careers of many other filmmakers. Now writer / director Larry Cohen gets his moment with **King Cohen**.

Cohen got his start in television and went on to write screenplays. When he was continually annoyed by how his scripts were translated as films, his wife Janelle suggested he start directing them. So he did. Cohen's films may be made inexpensively, but he inserted social commentary and inventiveness into them. He jokes that he bought a house to use as location in his first film **Bone,** then he kept using it for other films. He did. **King Cohen** includes a montage to back it up.

Cohen is shown through most of **King Cohen** attending movie conventions where be berates attendees for not knowing who is and signing autographs for those who do. Cohen may be inflating his own importance, but like the films he is known for, he is the only one who could do it the right way. (kingcohenmovie.com)

BOOKS

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Straight Edge: A Clear-Headed Hardcore Punk History
By Tony Rettman
Bazillion Points, 2017
379 pages | $29.95

"Oh boy, what can be said that hasn't been said already?"
—Dave Rata

Thanks, Dave, for that generic opening line for this oral history of a scene that's, arguably, full of the most generic bands. Just like a lot of the riffs, there's a repetitiveness in the narrative because, really, how much can a person say about their favorite sub-genre without sounding like an echo chamber? You've got your bands that laid the groundwork and everybody else spinning off from that, adding nuance yet never really deviating from the rigid structure. There's definitely a "cult" aspect to the whole subgenre, which is addressed and does have an element of truth. Ray Cappo is portrayed as practically divine, which is interesting considering that he later got so hard into the Krishna religion. This book had me reflect on the nature of subgenres themselves. What is there really to talk about? Would a conversation with D-beat / crasher crusty be any different (well, maybe with a lot of slurred words or that coke mania)? This is why a book like this (365 pages!) doesn't work.

All right, all right, so I'm not straight edge in the least, as you've might've guessed, and it's way too easy to trash a book full of the most white bread jocks, so I'm going to take a step back for a perspective that's a little more impartial. You can tell that the author is a fan who really cares by the way the book is meticulously laid out with tons of pictures, a list of essential records, and a small comic strip outlining the history without giving too much away. He also has put out other books on the Detroit and the NY '80s scene. Those books sound interesting because at least there's a diversity of perspective that makes punk so much more accessible. To be fair, there are some words from women and POC, but it's far too few. The most interesting chapter was "The Value's Here: Asia & the World's Edge," but unfortunately it was only two pages long. There just seemed to be so much untapped potential here, an example being when Ki Seok Seo (of the Geeks) explains how alcohol is very ingrained in the culture and the difficulty of navigating that. See, I would love to know more about. Yet, we're left with the "all my peers are drinking at parties and I don't want that" narrative, which isn't all that resonant outside of a suburban upbringing.

However, I won't deny that there are some genuine moments here and that reading about fans' / band members' enthusiasm will always be heartwarming to me. Straight edge really did help a lot of people battle addiction and strive for something that they saw as a better way. Also does a good attempt at recognizing modern bands rather getting lost in too much nostalgia. I say good attempt because it only mentions a couple of current dude bands when I know there are non-dude Straight edge bands out there. Damn, I can't help hating on the flaws, but I am excited to experience "Straight Edge Revenge" after this gets published. Anyway, I opened this with a generic line and I'll close it the same way: if you're a diehard straight edge fan you'll enjoy this book but otherwise pass on it.

—Dennis Marcial

PM Press Outspoken Authors: Fire.
By Elizabeth Hand
PM Press
120 Pages | $13.00

I confess that I have a copy of Elizabeth Hand's *Generation Loss* sitting unread in my bookshelf. A friend of mine gave it to me in 2015 while I was staying at his place during a summer tour. Here, he said, is an author who's right up your alley: she's into punk, and she's from Maine. (My wife's family is from Maine, and we both went to grad school there.) But you know about the good intentions paving the road to hell—and that's before considering the book critic pile, which is usually consists of at least three or four new volumes calling out for review.

I was happy find *Fire.* in the *MRR* stacks: here, I thought, is a perfect chance to check out an author whose stuff I've been meaning to read for a while—an author, it should be mentioned, with a considerable back catalogue.

When the volume arrived, I was initially bummed to find that it contained previously published stuff.

You know how it is: your record collection doubtlessly includes some B-sides / rarities albums. These sound like a good idea, especially for completists and record nerds, but they're called B-sides for a reason, you know? Almost fifteen years ago(!!!), I reviewed my record collection in alphabetical order and in doing so had the hardest time writing about such albums, because the level of quality between the best and worst material tends to drastically differ.

Even as you wrack your brain trying to come up with albums that buck the trend (besides *Singles Going Steady*, which is a given), I'm here to tell you: don't bother. I'm an idiot. Elizabeth Hand's book does exactly what I'm guessing the fine folks at PM Press intend it to do: provide a quick overview of all strong hues in Hand's palette.

Fire. begins with a short story called "The Saffron Gatherers." In

the story, the protagonist Suzanne rekindles a long-lost relationship with a gifted writer living in San Francisco. They visit an open house and agree to move in together once she returns from a business trip. The story is festooned with references to art and writing and has a dreamlike, almost drugged quality—a languid pleasance that makes the ending all the more impactful. I won't spoil it, but I will mention that Hand understands the power of the imagination, as corny as that may sound, and makes the decision to allow readers to fill in blanks rather than needlessly spelling everything out. Like "The Saffron Gatherers," the title story fits under the loose category of dystopian climate fiction (cli-fi, if you're nasty—it's a thing!). Unlike the previous story, this one relies on first-person narration. Hand repeats the trick of omitting detail here, cutting one side of the narrated story to all call, no response. It's hard to write dialogue that sounds convincingly like speech, but Hand, an expert stylist, has no such trouble.

Two pieces of Hand's criticism ring out, calling for digging and exploration: she writes on Alice Shelton, a writer who wrote in the distinctly masculine world of 1970s science fiction under the assumed name James J. Tiptree Jr., and on Thomas Disch, an openly gay 1960s science fiction writer. I love pieces like this, which allow neophytes like myself to establish a base in the past off of which to branch. Hand is generous with her praise in these essays, subscribing to the punk urge of thanking tons of bands in the liner notes so listeners can do their own digging.

There's biography here, too, in the shape of a memoir essay and an extended interview. Like her essays, these pieces showcase Hand's generosity, as she details the events and influences that shaped her into a writer. Readers of *MRR* might do the same mental math as me when certain years and cities are mentioned: here, as an example, Hand mentions living in Washington DC in 1979, which immediately caused me to wonder which bands she saw. A few paragraphs later, she mentioned seeing films in Georgetown—the same theater where the Dischord crew worked, maybe?—and catching the Ramones' first area appearance.

Fire. is an installment of PM Press's Outspoken Author series. If this slim volume is any indication, the series is a must-read, a means for readers to introduce themselves to indispensible writers like Elizabeth Hand. It's great to be genuinely excited to dive into an author's work—which I am. So if you'll excuse me, I'll be swimming in *Generation Loss* with *Singles Going Steady* playing in the background.

—Michael T. Fournier

Locust House
By Adam Gnade
Pioneers Press and Three One G, 2016
50 pgs | $13.99

In *Locust House*, Adam Gnade tells the fictional story of a small group of friends during one night at a San Diego punk house show. Because Adam was born and raised in San Diego, he's got some personal history shining through the fiction here. He's able to give insider observations of the geography from Golden Hill to E Street, Broadway, 25th Street and the eastern edge of town, including intricate details of the architecture and the culture blending and clashing from backyard parties hosting mariachi bands to street food vendors slinging elotes. He paints an intriguing picture, "And that is what San Diego is—a desert, but a desert in disguise, made green with the water of other (poorer) cities."

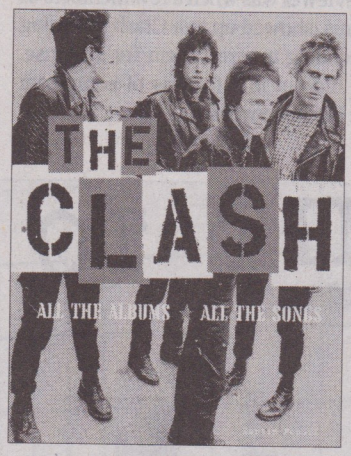
When main characters James, Tyler, and Frankie are on their way to a house show featuring their favorite band, the Locust, the story really begins as Adam spares no detail: "Frances [Frankie] looks up as the light turns to green. Above them the black sky is streaked like lines of old scars on skin."

Finally at the show, these characters, along with the sea of other show goers packed in a relatively small space, deliver an honest feel for what Adam surely felt at house shows in early '00s San Diego—the frenetic ant hill-like activity of drinking, smoking, bleeding, sitting, lying, playing, puking, coming and going. He tells the story as only he could, "The street was lined with vans that the bands had come in and some of them had their side doors open and you could see all your heroes drinking or smoking or talking or just chilling before their set."

After the show, James, Frankie, and Tyler take turns, individually and back and forth in movie-script style, giving us their perspectives of the show and party, riffing intimate and existential, and eventually, looking back to times before the Locust House ceased to exist. It is the candid consciousness of these individual characters' private thoughts that deliver the richness of the story with beauty and tenderness, disbelief and dirtiness, and pre-cynical youthfulness that perfectly captures a sliver of time and place never to be repeated.

Locust House is an eloquent time capsule, a vast love letter to the early '00s San Diego punk scene, and a quick-read novella—quick like a beloved 45-second track on your favorite 7" record.

—Jessica Mills



The Clash:
All the Albums, All the Songs
Martin Popoff
Voyageur Press, 2018
240 pages | $30.00

A gorgeous hardcover, *The Clash: All the Albums, All the Songs* is an encyclopedic look at every song in the Clash's discography. The author is a meticulous music historian and journalist with a bibliography longer than the track listing of *Sandinista!*. The graphic design is excellent with an aesthetically pleasing balance of pictures and text. One flyer reads "Britain's burning: The last big event before we all go to jail!," an amusingly grim take on 1977, a year into the band's career when the British government and police were concerned about the implications of punk's rise. The author provides many popular and rare photographs of the band throughout their career. Each album section is prefaced by a short essay on the album itself and where the band was at the time. A page or two are devoted to every song—from the hits to the critically roasted tracks on the final album. Popoff demonstrates an artful mastery of music writing, his prose singing without fawning, calling the Clash's music "an often giddy and always endearing celebration of humanity, ungently croaked and yet so eloquently espoused."

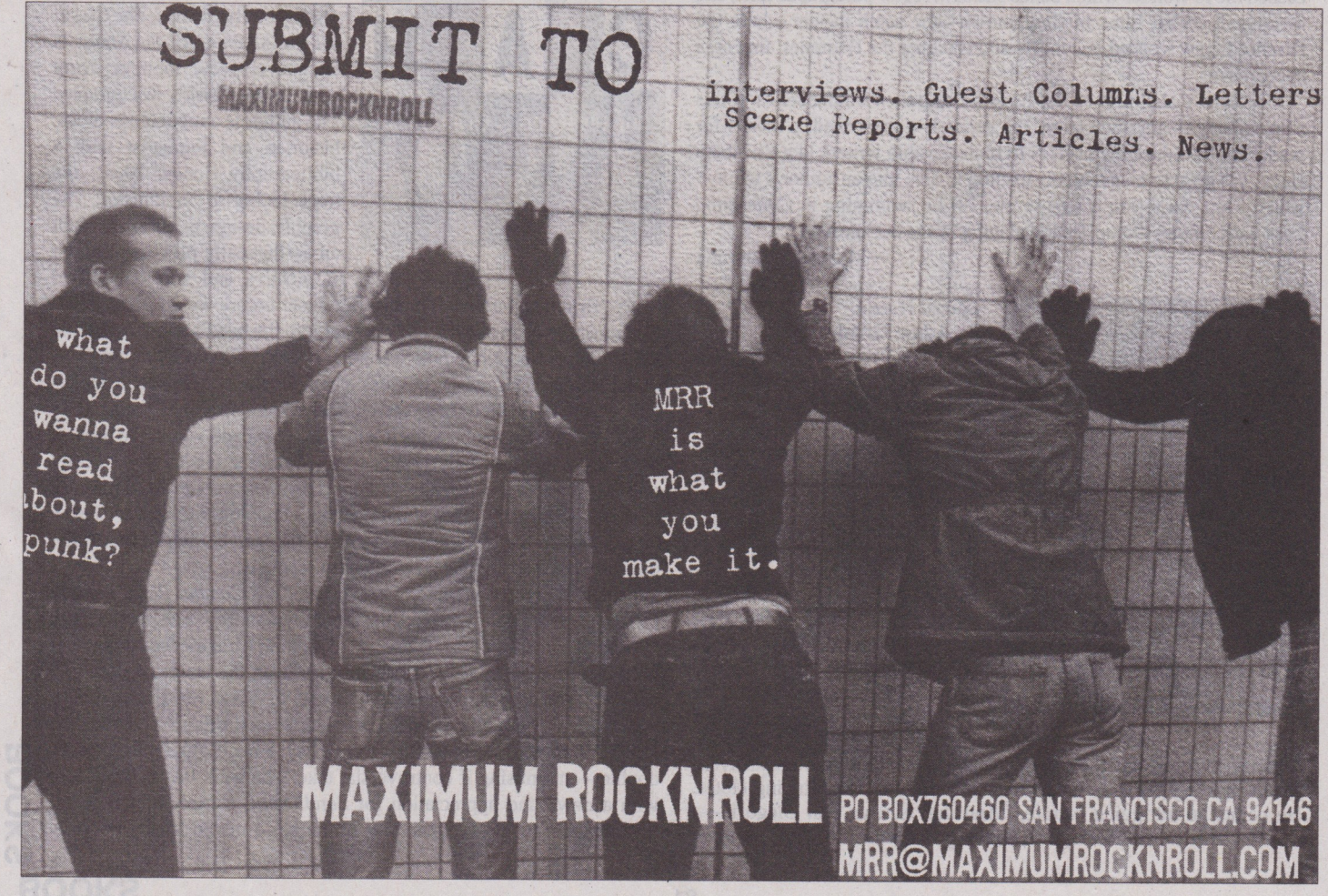
Fans will enjoy revisiting old favorites from *Combat Rock*, *London Calling*, and the eponymous debut album with a fresh perspective. The classic "Rudie Can't Fail" is described as "told from the lens of a wide-eyed teen trembling at life's possibilities from the inside of rude boy culture." The author discusses the virtues of *Give 'Em Enough Rope* and ponders if the album could compete for the title of The Greatest Clash Album if *London Calling* were given a handicapped for being a double—an amusing if controversial take. The book leaves the reader with a newfound appreciation for *Sandinista!*, a triple album found impenetrable by casual fans. The album has a mixed legacy not only

because of its length, but because of questionable artistic choices like the inclusion of a children's choir rendition of "Career Opportunities" and numerous unnecessary dub tracks. If one takes the time—as the author so eloquently does—to sift through the filler, the album has a number of gems like the out-of-place, yet bizarre and beautiful, violin-heavy track "Lose This Skin." He comically acknowledges album's "gradual descent into madness" and its disintegration into a "nihilistic and terminating" sixth side. Even *Cut the Crap* is given a little mercy as "Dirty Punk" and "We are The Clash" are given a tad of redemption that falls just short of praise.

The author recounts stories that offer depth and humanity to the band's history. The occasionally rocky relationship between the band's primary songwriters is illustrated in various instances of Jones sharing a pop song with the group, to be accepted by Strummer on the condition that he be allowed to rewrite and politicize the lyrics. "I'm Bored with You," a Jones song about frustrations with a girlfriend, became "I'm So Bored with the USA," a punk complaint about the pervasiveness of American culture. "Guns on the Roof" was written about an incident that involved the band being mistaken for IRA insurgents as they shot air guns at pigeons from the roof, prompting the deployment of a helicopter and eight tactical unit vans. The developing interests of the band are expounded; the band's reggae adventures are well-known, but few may be aware of Jones's interest in early hip-hop, which inspired him to wear backward baseball hats and earn the nickname "Whack Attack." The anecdote that most amused this reviewer was when a few members of the Blockheads donned police uniforms, showed up to a Clash recording session, and scared the band by pretending to arrest them for drug use. During the escapade, Joe Strummer hid out in a fortress of equipment boxes that he had constructed for hot boxing purposes.

Not every music fan may feel the need to own every album of their favorite band; even fewer may be compelled to learn the backstory of each track. At a minimum, this book would make a lovely coffee table decoration, but to a motivated fan, it is an essential guide to the group once known as "the only band that matters."

—Caitlin Xavier



RECORDS

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(WN) Robert Collins

THE AGGRAVATED – "First To Die" CD

Not that this is a bad thing at all, but you know that thing when old metal skate dudes from the '80s get together and create some party thrash? Sure, it's been done a thousand times, and it's a little dated, but it's pretty fuckin' fun and seems harmless until I realize some of the the lyrics are at times from the point of view of a wild maniac who might also be of the patriotic ilk. You know, the kind that parties day in and day out and skates to work, but thinks people in need of benefits are milking America dry, and might fight you for it if you both get drunk enough. Good party thrash, though. (DZ)
(D-Fens)

APOCALYPSE NOW – "4 Track" EP

Bleak studs'n'spikes punk from Portland. A description that could apply to very many bands throughout history, but APOCALYPSE NOW have a handful of interesting tricks that help them stand out. The guitarist's serious skill is a huge asset; D-beat bands that can deploy credible solos are always a step ahead of those that cannot. While Dis-bands definitely inform the core of the band's sound, they also dip into a bit of UK82 glue bag melodic bounce at moments, especially in the opening "Blind Faith" and into proto-thrash riffing à la later CONCRETE SOX or the VARUKERS lineup with the two dudes who went on to form SACRILEGE. The record-closing "Waste" is a bit of a mid-tempo slog, but every other song on the record has at least one cool and memorable moment, be it a melody or a riff or a solo or all of the above. The minimalist design and packaging aren't terribly attention-grabbing, but genre fans will find a lot to like here. (AU)
(Distort Reality)

BAR STOOL PREACHERS – "Blatant Propaganda" CD

Ska punk from the UK from a band who came to the US recently. This is more ska than punk with its nice full band swing. This is well-produced and pretty damn good. Think the TOASTERS, the UPTONES, or INTERRUPTERS musically. The added studio horns and keyboards add to the ska flavor. The vocals kind of remind me of the HOUSEMARTINS for some reason as they are very British with good tone without getting pop. Good band. (RL)
(self-released)

BAR STOOL PREACHERS – "8.6 Days (All the Broken Hearts)" flexi

This is a song off of the BAR STOOL PREACHERS' new album (likely also reviewed [by someone else] in this ish). The BAR STOOL PREACHERS are a collection of clean young men from Brighton who must be very famous. I say this because not only do they have 7,000 Facebook likes, but the picture on (in?) this flexi shows them all smiles and guitars aloft in front of a crowd of thousands. As I think this is as much an advertisement for Pirates Press's flexi-making abilities as it is for the band's music, I will focus on the flexi part. The "picture flexi" has a nice, clear photo on it, in multiple colors, and it plays pretty loud and clear. OK, there's some skips at the end, but that's probably because I was using it as a coaster for several days before actually listening to it. My fault, not Pirates'. I do not hesitate to recommend Pirates Press's flexis, if you are so inclined to make flexis and stuff them in your magazine as freebies or pass them out as Christmas presents or whatever. As for this BAR STOOL PREACHERS song, I cannot recommend it, as it is kind of wimpy anthemic punk that means to pull on the (broken) heartstrings, but really just sort of makes you pump your fist modestly. A generous comparison is JOE STRUMMER's late solo work. It's okay leaning bad. I do commend the various BAR STOOL PREACHERS members for wearing both a "Fight Racism" shirt and a "Punch Nazis" shirt in the band photo. (MR)
(Pirates Press)

BAR STOOL PREACHERS – "Grazie Governo" flexi

I can't tell which wave of shitty ska this is, but this ridiculously fancy flexi has Apple Music, Spotify, and some other bullshit printed on it, and is pretty worthless to me. (DZ)
(Pirate's Press)

BAR STOOL PREACHERS – "Grazie Governo" LP

This UK-based group seems like they have a lot of fun. Firstly, the packaging on this LP is awesome and comes with some logo stencils on the inner sleeve. Secondly, the multicolored splatter vinyl is beautiful. Thirdly, it comes with three of the songs on full-color photographic flexi discs, which is a killer bonus. Musically, they bounce between sounding like the MAD CADDIES in their prime and the LOVED ONES. They particularly demonstrate their pirate ska affinity on "DLTDHYOTWO." The highlight track for the album is "Raced Through Berlin," and I'd bet on that being a track that can hook a few people on this band. Just lots of fun to be had here. (RH)
(Pirate's Press)

BAR STOOL PREACHERS – "Warchief" flexi

Looks like someone got a deal on some flexis! Here's one of three flexis from this UK-based outfit this month, this one dubbed the "yellow flexi." Shit sounds hella heartfelt, like an emo street punk band, if that's a thing. Singer has one of those voices that's both melodic and gruff, so it all goes down easy while you're clenching your fists. Promo for the LP reviewed in this issue. (GB)
(Pirates Press)

BETRAYED – "Why Must Everything Involve Politics" CD

I think I must be the *MRR* compound's go to guy for "old dudes still playing music," and I'm OK with that. BETRAYED released their first tape in the Philippines in 1986, and although this isn't right up my alley, it's pretty rad and I'm stoked on it. It's a little too polished for me at times, and the styles vary from song to song, but despite the whoa-oh-ohs and melodic as hell leads, some of the hooks on this super gritty pop punk release are undeniable. I'm pretty much an instant-yet-late-to-the-game fan of their earlier output, and even this new stuff is getting a couple extra spins. (DZ)
(Aklasan)

BIZARRE X / CONSUMED TO DEATH – split EP

Two sides of blistering German grind. Both groups on this split are just made up of a drummer and a bassist, strictly the bare essentials. BIZARRE X offer explosive noise and pummeling blastbeats throughout, though closing out their side with a couple of tracks with some atonal violin hovering over offering another layer of cacophony, plus a BLACK FLAG cover. CONSUMED TO DEATH play a more loose variety of clattering noise shit interspersed with NEANDERTHAL style solo bass riffing, all coming at you from the other end of an abandoned aircraft hangar. The kind of thing that people you've lost touch with are afraid that you're into, it's great. (EW)
(Aktiver Austand in Plastik / Bog / THC & DIY / Vulgar / Wooaaargh)

BLOSSOM HILL – "Under The North Star" CD

I've reviewed this band before and my opinion hasn't changed. This is a GREEN DAY clone band fueled by BILLIE JOE sound-alike vocals. From Finland, I suppose this sound wasn't done to death like here in the US. They are good at it, and they'd make a helluva tribute band. There's just no way to hear a song by these guys and not think it's GREEN DAY. (RL)
(Fast Decade)

BONECRUSHER – "Every Generation" CD

Long running Southern California punks, BONECRUSHER maintain an edge with mid tempo gruff jams and screaming leads. Equal parts Adult Oi! and gritty dive bar punk rock'n'roll, but delivered by obvious veterans. Lyrics about standing up for, and thinking for, yourself. (WN)
(Knock Out)

THE BRANKAS – "My Parkour Body Is The Paint And The World Is My Canvas. I Don't See Obstacles, I See Opportunities." LP

This was recorded in San Jose, and this local duo seems to play the type of music that would fit perfectly in the San Jose scene of 2007. Put them on a bill with PTERADON and SHINOBU and let them do their thing. I think both the aforementioned bands were on Asian Man, and this would sort of catch that vibe. Or you might expect to see them like on a bill with FISCHER at that bike co-op or opening for WILD MOTH. So you know how 1994! sounded like the TINY HAWKS but had just slightly less hardcore vibes? This takes something like 1994! and makes it a bit more post-something (they throw some synth on there). Anyway, if you were a fan of PTERADON or SHINOBU, this might be exactly what you wanna hear! (P$)
(self-released)

CASTLE BLACK – "The Gods that Adored You" CD

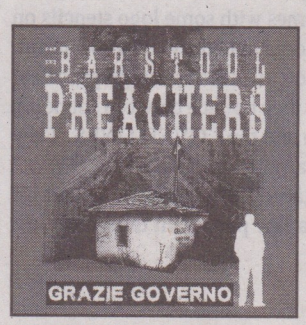
I swear to god, with the mis-matching fonts and pastel-painted artwork, this looks *exactly* like something you'd find in a circa-1998 alt-rock CD dollar bin. Further, there are absolutely no dates on the CD to prove it's actually from 2018. Thus, I am operating under the totally logical and reasonable assumption that this was delivered to *MRR* in 1998, fell in some crack, and was randomly unearthed by a shitworker just last week and absentmindedly thrown in the "to be reviewed" stack. I guess I could use a computer to verify my theory, but using the internet to solve my problems would not be a very late-'90s thing to do! In any case, the music here is intermittently pretty good, with sort of an alternative pop rock feel that's just punk enough to credibly be included in this magazine. Earnest and arty, but in a largely accessible, mainstream way. One song in particular, where the bass and guitar and drums seem to be playing different parts, but actually aren't, is pretty memorable. Glad this was unearthed. (MR)
(self-released)

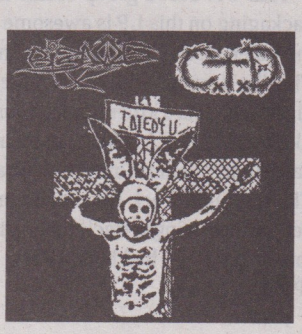
STEFAN CHRISTENSEN – "Open Day" EP

Since the end of his band, ESTROGEN HIGHS, STEFAN CHRISTENSEN has been making truly gorgeous, hard to classify, guitar-based music, and I've been a big fan—see my interview with him in issue #423 about his label, C/Site, which dips into his recording history as well. This, his first 7" as a solo artist, actually came out last year, but we're just getting it for review now. It's another beautiful record, one that leans a little more rock than most of his other work, especially on the B-side. Esteemed former coordinator and current reviewer Layla Gibbon mentioned that it wouldn't feel out of place next to V-3, which struck me as an apt comparison. Where CHRISTENSEN's 12"s have sprawled out a little more, in accordance with the format, we've got some more self-contained, song-based tracks here. Really, really nice stuff; every new STEFAN CHRISTENSEN release is exciting, and this one is well worth picking up if you missed it upon release. (MF)
(I Dischi Del Barone)

THE CLINCH – "Our Path Is One" CD

Burly gruff sounding Oi! / street punk from Australia. This is their debut full length, and what this doesn't offer in originality it does make up for it with spirit and anthems. I'm thinking BUSINESS and BONECRUSHER here, but it could also be any number of past street





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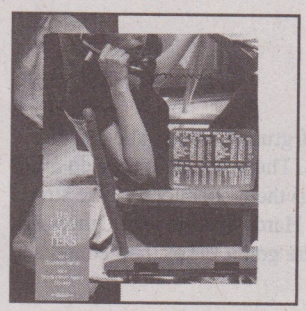
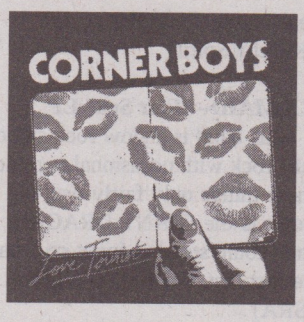
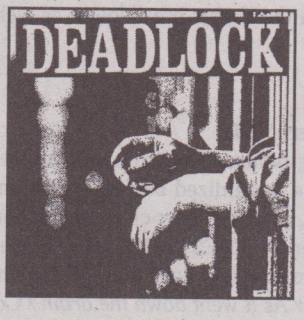






punk bands. Decent stuff. (RL)
(Osu!)

CLITERATI / VIOLATION WOUND – split LP

Two sides of fast metallic punk. Portland's CLITERATI put a space-age bend on former VOETSEK frontperson Ami's delivery, and it suits their futuristic brand of face melting. Plenty of downtuned, churning punk, with dynamic breaks and leads that could easily lead the band to pure blistering crossover thrash on future releases. VIOLATION WOUND on the flip (I don't name 'em, kids, I just review 'em) are less nuanced and stick with the meaty end of meat and potatoes metalpunk. Downtuned, all-go / no-slow, fierce vocals, and an occasional blast combine forces for five tracks that present as a pure and unadulterated pummeling. (WN)
(Tankcrimes)

C. MEMI + NEO-MATISSE – "No Chocolate / Dream's Dream"

Solid gold Japanese art-punk from 1980! "No Chocolate" is a true gem of the ways that punk can be explorative and truly innovative. Seemingly taking the verse chord changes from "Psycho Killer," NEO MATISSE provides a positively hypnotizing backing track to the acerbic wails from vocalist C. MEMI and her at turns haunting and chaotic piano lines. Swerving between New Wave exercise and arty improvisations, "No Chocolate" is a total winner. On the other hand, "Dream's Dream," with its gurgling synths and gentle rhythm section is a pulsing piece that could fill in as one of the mellower songs on a THROBBING GRISTLE LP. That is to say, "Dream's Dream" manages to be both beautiful and ugly at the same time. No wonder that contemporary artists like the STALIN and HIJOKAIDAN were mesmerized by their work! Truly a wond'rous single—get your hands on this fucker ASAP! (JD)
(Bitter Lake)

THE COMPLETERS – "Unspoken Signals" EP

The songs and the artwork are beautiful, dark, and dreamy. There's a heavy influence from '80s heavy hitters like *Rebel Yell*-era BILLY IDOL, the DAMNED, and the most tender moments of the MISFITS—but adding synths into the mix, and chorus on the bass. Highly dramatic and stylized, the COMPLETERS' songwriting isn't afraid to play with suspenseful pauses, emotional buildups, dreamy instrumental interludes, and Danzig-style vocal bravado. The record comes with three postcard-sized prints of cool collages by Lucia Marques. Definitely something to check out for fans of the current darkwave wave and anyone who likes to lose themselves on the dancefloor to a shadowy sea of sorrow and redemption. (HB)
(Thrash Unreal)

CORNER BOYS – "Love Tourist" EP

Can't remember the last time I heard a new band convincingly recreate that old fashioned studio sound, but Vancouver's CORNER BOYS have done it! If I didn't tell you otherwise, you could easily believe this is some long lost circa-1980 Quintessence Records outtakes or studio reels from *Vancouver Independence*. It's not sooo punky that it loses that trademark poppy edge, which is maybe akin to the first POINTED STICKS EP. Killer stuff, members also active with CHAIN WHIP. (GB)
(Dirt Cult)

CREMALLERAS – "Mercado Negro" LP

Kicking off with a brutal whirlwind of unstoppable hardcore riffs, CREMALLERAS keep the momentum up throughout the record. The vocals are delivered with the panic and urgency, and the sound is so full that it takes a few spins to realize it's just guitar and drums on the recording. Totally raw and fierce, this record will start a circle pit in your head. Lyrics in Spanish explore themes of autonomy, feminism, and resistance with extremely macabre style and the same magnitude of fury as the music. Fuck yes! (HB)
(Cintas Pepe / Thrilling Living)

CRUELSTER – "Riot Boys" LP

You know that feeling when you meet someone at a party and everyone likes them but they still make you feel uneasy and slightly uncomfortable? That's how I feel about CRUELSTER. Like, all your riffs are here, the songs are interesting, they're played with wild fucking hardcore abandon and the singer sounds pissed as fuck and sarcastic (equal parts UROCHROMES and FUNERAL CONE). On the surface, it's another stellar Lumpy release, but ironic(?) lyrics (I hate irony) that just feel fucking dodgy upon their delivery make my skin crawl. I'm not a sensitive listener...but don't mind your stodgy *MRR* reviewer... just keep consuming and buying as we dive headlong into the abyss of utter nothingness!! Great cover art. (GH)
(Lumpy)

DEADLOCK – "Deadlock" EP

Dead simple bare-bones '80s Boston style hardcore. Primarily sub-60 second songs, straightforward verse-chorus-verse blasts of NEGATIVE FX / SSD / SIEGE with a few fleeting moments of MINOR THREAT-style catchiness pushing in at the edges. Ten or fifteen years ago this would have been lost in a sea of similar '80s USHC revival records, but now that the field has cleared out a bit it has a chance to shine. The drumming is top-notch for the style, hard-hitting and fast but never so busy as to be distracting, while the guitar riffing and tone (the tone is fantastic, very early BLITZ) are tight and powerful. The vocalist packs a lot of lyrics into these very short songs, and in doing so sacrifices a bit of intensity in favor of word count, but that's hardly a deal breaker. When they're at their best ("Paper Politician," "Don't Wanna Know," "Satisfy"), they're really fucking great. Nothing wrong with being derivative if you can pull it off as well as this gang does. Great font choices in their very computer-free looking layout got me hyped too. (AU)
(Painkiller)

DEATHGRAVE – "So Real, It's Now" LP

What a putrid corpse sounds like when it pops like a balloon in the California sun. Fucking disgusting, gross-out death grind, done by some Bay Area underground veterans. The thrashing blasts will satisfy your secret death metal desires, but the raw edges keep it for the real freaks. Fans of the guitar player's other band, BRAINOIL,

will appreciate the massive riffage in the sludgy breakdowns as well. Highly recommended! (BA)
(Tankcrimes)

THE DESTRUCTORS – "Pünkopera" CD

My first experience with this long-running English band and all I keep thinking is *holy shit, why*. Take bastardized butt rock riffs and combine it with anthemic street punk, give it a super clean production, and *boom*, you've got this new stinker from DESTRUCTORS. In their song "In At The Start" (which refers to how they were there when punk began) they note "*The clever got out / As it went down the drain / Cos when it's elite / It starts to sound the same.*" These old gaffers ain't clever, eh? Skip it. (JD)
(self-released)

THE DEVIL'S REJECTS / WET SPINACH – split 12"

My favorite things about this release: the band name WET SPINACH, which I can't stop thinking about, and the fact that it plays at 45 and is thus over more quickly than anticipated. My least favorite things about this release: all of the music on it. The DEVIL'S REJECTS sound as generic as their name (albeit less rockabilly), with a throaty, growling vocalist who sounds like he's meeting the band for the first time at the recording session. WET SPINACH are a little more stoned, a little harder-edged, and a lot more noodly. I enjoyed neither!!! I hope they had a great time making a record with their friends!!! (MF)
(self-released)

DONKEY BUGS – "Ancient Chinese Secrets" LP

Not sure what could prep unsuspecting punks for this 'un (maybe the mere mention of FACTORYMEN?), but that is exactly where the bulk of Da BUGS' charm comes from. *Ancient Chinese Secrets* is Clevo-punk's latest and perhaps most confounding oddity, centered on synth / electronic derangement that's always surprising but never too serious. "Men In High Heels" and "ABC's Of Lust" are the pillars here, each proffering some kinda Stupid Industrial Punk™ sound that's throbbing and deviant / sexy and punk. I'm gonna buy a copy now and bleep it loud 'til I barf all over my dungeon. (MC)
(Fish)

DUMB VISION / TRASH KNIFE – split EP

TRASH KNIFE has a very raw recording, which lends itself to their straightforward punk approach with hints of hardcore energy. The two guitars in this band are playing almost against each other at times, which is a cool approach, but they blend back into each other to make explosive choruses. Their singer Lauren belts out each line confidently with that same hardcore energy, but carries each tune, which is more interesting to me than just yelling. I was gonna say that I'd like to hear them with a cleaner recording, but their other releases are more "pro," so this is a cool change for them. DUMB VISION has a bit of a rawer '90s pop punk feel, but also a bit of garage rock. Like, I kept expecting a "whoa-oh" to slip in, but they didn't go that far. All three of their songs are catchy and upbeat...pure summertime music. Artwork is a real Lumpy rip. (GH)
(Kitschy Spirit)

EX MAID– "Fair Sex" LP

This band is a slow rock smoothie of grunge, doom, shoegaze, and surf rock with occasional pop moments. The problem is they do all of these things only fairly well but none of them excellently. The strong point is the GIANT DRAG-era Annie Hardy-like vocals. Otherwise, they could stand to focus on what they're going for as their sound and perfect that. (RH)
(SRA)

FALSE FIGURE – LP

Oakland's prime chorused-guitar post-punk band has previously done a demo and a 7", neither of which I've heard. Their first 12er is standard fare KILLING JOKE-founded post-punk—midtempo drumming and wide, crooning vocals (think BELLICOSE MINDS) atop melodic and glassy guitars and bass. The songs are lengthy in regard to my attention span and don't vary too much, but the playing is solid and the overall sound should be appealing to deathrock fans. (MA)
(Last Hour / Near Dark)

THE FITS – "Bored Of Education" EP

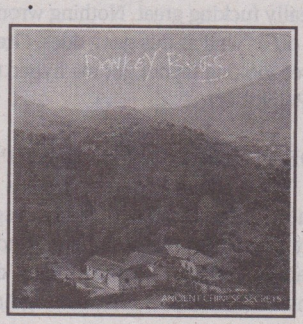
I can save my couple hundred bucks (thanks Ugly Pop!) now that I've got a nice reissue of this particular Toronto punk slab. One of the top Canadian Bloodstains / KBD-qualifying records, though I don't think any of these three songs made it on to those comps. The best track, "Bored of Education," appeared on a four-song 7" accompanying the book *Smash the State*, which is what prompted me to add it to my want list. Spunky, crude punk inspired by the first wave. Sits comfortably next to VILETONES, TEENAGE HEAD, and the DIODES. Four panel insert with photos and liner notes is an added bonus. (MA)
(Ugly Pop)

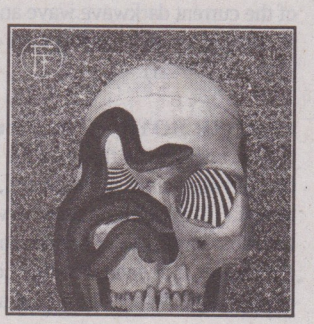
THE GASHERS – "In Trust We Bleed" CD

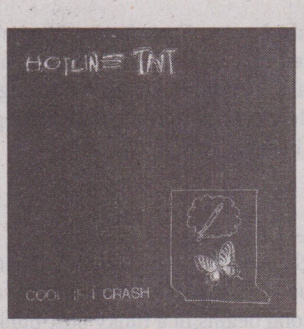
Have you noticed that "old school punk rock" usually sounds nothing like actual old school punk rock, but more like '90s melodic punk mixed with RANCID? The GASHERS sound like they also got some inspiration from GRIMPLE, but not enough. Gruff vocals, mohawks and a real twangy bass. (GH)
(Squidhat)

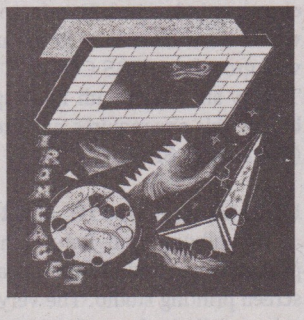
GIN GOBLINS – "What Lies Beyond" CD

Based on the fliers included in the CD art, it looks like this band had a really solid run for a while and got to play some awesome shows with bands like the DICKIES and the DAMNED, and it looks like the drummer from the DAMNED produced this. What you get is something more along the lines of the DAMNED than the DICKIES, but with a very '90s sound. Almost like it was recorded by the same sound engineer as some of those Punk-O-Rama comps. When I look into this band online, it looks like they got their start in the '90s and this is their first album in a decade or so. So let's loosely call these dudes









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DAMNED revivalist punk with an ear to that '90s Warped Tour sound. Looks like the album is a benefit for rabbits' rights in Scotland so if this sounds like it could be your cup of tea would be worth checking it out! We can ride around this town and let the cops chase us around. Hey jealousy. (P$)
(Goblins)

HAAN – "By The Grace Of Blood and Guts" LP

Powerhouse sludge rock with the guitar fierceness of HIGH ON FIRE and MELVINS. Slower than QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE but similar in its unexpected changes. Vocals ballroom through like DANZIG with the melancholy cold edge of LIFE OF AGONY. This sounds like weathered people sonically mending the broken things within. This is a heavy album, but everything is tucked and tied so evenly and calmly, it's actually soothing. A pleasant listening experience filled with strange rhythms and poetic patterns. The cover art is fucking awesome. Something like *Altars of Madness* dyed dusty mustard sepia from the brownest steeped tea leaves. This is your tea-sipping metal, if you will. (JR)
(Aqualamb)

HALF HUMAN – "Positive Image" LP

I feel a little bad for these guys because I don't think this is the zine to send this to. If this is a punk bible, and I'm tasked with preaching the gospel, I do proclaim this to be more indie rock or alternative rock than punk. Best of luck fellas, but I'm pretty sure your brand of brooding would likely find more sympathetic ears elsewhere. Yes, and I cringe as I say this in *MRR*...but literally I don't think this is punk enough. (P$)
(Specious Arts)

HANK WOOD AND THE HAMMERHEADS – LP

My live experiences with HANK WOOD AND THE HAMMERHEADS never made me feel like listening to their records because they sounded to my ears like a psychedelic punk band trying to compete with a drum circle...and that is just not my bag, baby. On their third LP, the HAMMERHEADS bust out a full-on rock record with glam leanings, an organ and acoustic overdubs. It brings to mind *Raw Power*-era STOOGES, TIGHT BROS FROM WAY BACK WHEN and contemporaries RIK AND THE PIGS. On the surface, it sounds like a complete rock'n'roll party and I'll bet it's fun as fuck to writhe around a warehouse to this music...but almost every song lyrically falls into the same vein of loneliness, pain and sadness...like every lyric sounds like it could be seamlessly swapped into a different song on the LP. And a cursory glance at the lyric sheet shows me that the word "baby" is uttered no less than a whopping 65 times! Sixty-five!! Still, fun time party rock record for the shoestring heads that all got into glam and shit. Y'all have fun and keep the Naloxone close by. (GH)
(Toxic State)

HATE RECORDER / NEGATIVE SEX – split EP

Reno bands NEGATIVE SEX and HATE RECORDER team up to bring us this post-hardcore 7" release. Really driving, mostly straightforward post-hardcore with some post-punk inclinations. It falls into background music that makes you ask "oh, who's this?" However, when I dove further into the content, nothing about the release was able to keep my attention, and I got sidetracked. I pick up on LACK and TRANSISTOR, TRANSISTOR influences. (RS)
(Carbonated Sounds / Humaniterrorist)

HECKSPOILER / LESLIE ACT THRILLER – spilt EP

LESLIE ACT THRILLER are a emo / post-hardcore band done in the vein of DAITRO, HOT CROSS, or even *Some Blood* era OFF MINOR. Ultimately, LESLIE ACT THRILLER have a BEAR VS SHARK rock feel, especially with the shouted / yelled vocals, which do not pique my interest but also don't totally kill the vibe for me. They groove and feel very in the pocket, which is so so important in my opinion for an emo band. The second song, "Cpt. Kill Patrol" feels a lot more realized and thought out to me, and I would love to hear more songs like that. Side B of this split 7" is HECKSPOILER: extremely well done bass and drum hardcore. HECKSPOILER could be the skeleton of most hardcore bands I have ever heard, which is what makes this band such a gem. Lots of a repetitive melodic groove, with awesome bouncy breakdowns. It's awesome to hear a bass emit so much melody. All in all, great split from Austria. (RS)
(Black Lava / Wembley)

HIRS COLLECTIVE – "First One Hundred Songs" LP

I distinctly remember not too long ago turning to the hive mind that is social media asking "what's up with some grindy hardcore bands that are not about bros?" Within minutes, a friend linked me to this amazing record. I remember having my mind instantly melted, and it only further was obliterated when it dawned on me that HIRS is a two piece, guitar and vocals, and the drums are programmed. I instantly fell into a black hole consuming all the songs and videos I could. *First One Hundred Songs* really hits the nail on the head as far as pissed off grindy hardcore that is on crust and screamo cusp. Major PAGENINETYNINE, the SWARM AKA KNEE DEEP IN THE DEAD, THE LOCUST, and GRAF ORLOCK feels. After their long awaited full length LP *Friends. Lovers. Favorites.*, which focuses on collaborations with so many other amazing artists (shout out to the homies Pierce Jordan and Anna Vo), out on Get Better and SRA, it's dope to come back to this particular record and hear how HIRS has musically grown and evolved. This record serves as a compilation of many 7" splits, covers, and just instrumentals, and it truly captures HIRS in those moments. They offer their takes on songs by IRON LUNG, MELT BANANA, SPAZZ, JENNY PICCOLO, and HIS HERO IS GONE (just to name a few). Basically, support this band, go see them live, and if you can catch them as a full band, consider yourself lucky. (RS)
(SRA)

HIRS COLLECTIVE – "Friends. Lovers. Favorites." LP

Brutal technical grind with metalcore breakdowns. Guest lyrics and vocals from a formidable collection of allies ranging from Shirley Manson to ALICE BAG, and the variety accentuates the COLLECTIVE's intended flow—vocal and spoken word breaks, brief bursts of noise, all within the confines of a simply devastatingly

chaotic grind record. To refer to *Friends. Lovers. Favorites.* as "fierce" would do a disservice to the unbridled rage packed into these clear wax grooves—HIRS COLLECTIVE are uncompromising, and strong. Twenty-six tracks with five superb electronic remixes... Take a deep breath, this one requires full attention in every way. (WN)
(Get Better / SRA)

HERMANO AND THE MARINES – LP

This album from Italy comes packaged in a handsomely screen printed cover, and in fact appears to be at least partially released by a screen printing studio. The very first song begins in a funky post-punk vein not dissimilar to the BIG BOYS, which I suspect is the reason I was assigned this record for review. However, if the ruling junta here at *MRR* Towers had listened beyond the first few bars, they'd have discovered an LP of heavy stoner metal. Not usually my thing, but I'll give it a whirl. Heavy on the medium-paced riffs, but with eclectic, jazzy interludes and unusual structures. There's a slightly wacky feel to this, which takes it out of the realm of '70s cosplay common with this style. Get after it if it sounds like your deal. (AM)
(Johnny Ca$$h / Perpetua Edizioni)

HOLLY AND THE NICE LIONS – "Black Moon" CD

Tuff and stormy rock'n'roll that's not nearly as cute as the band name might lead you to believe. Holly's got a great voice, but the tracks are better when her voice serves the songs, rather than the reverse. Nothing here is really exciting enough to hold my interest, but it was all perfectly fine. (MF)
(Memorized Dictionary)

HOTLINE TNT – "Cool If I Crash" EP

This new Minneapolis group throws down four tracks of up-tempo indie rock in the style of LILYS or DINOSAUR JR. Gliding and drooping threads of guitar feedback over moody chord changes and a rhythm section that always keeps moving ahead, even when riffing at awkward time signatures like SWIRLIES at their most dissociative. Fans of BIG BITE and WEED (there's some membership overlap with the latter) will definitely be here for this. (EW)
(self-released)

IRON CAGES – "Indulgence" EP

Two words: space chaos. This DC hardcore 7" takes a lot of chances, which means a lot in a time when most of what's coming out sticks pretty close to a tried-and-true formula. There's a little bit of everything—moshy hardcore breakdowns, blazing blast beats, mid-tempo rockers, etc. For that, I would compare them to CONCEALED BLADE, or even TØRSÖ, but really it's hard for me to tie this band to anything else. My favorite lyrics are at the beginning of "Moral Hazard:" *"Savior or executioner, iron fist in a Latex glove."* (AJ)
(Hog Wild / Society Bleeds)

LOS INDUCTORES – "13" LP

LOS INDUCTORS are three-piece from Madrid, Spain. They play straightforward rock'n'roll. The songs are high-energy with no pretense. I don't know what they are singing, but I know it sounds better in Spanish. (CK)
(Thrashin')

JAD – "Wściekły" EP

First of all, this is a great-looking, super-DIY record with beautifully screened silver-on-black sleeves and an old-school xerox-styled insert. A-plus on the curb appeal. The record itself is fairly straightforward meaty hardcore, enlivened by a couple of killer mosh riffs and especially by the marching, chanting "Durny Zwierz," the only track on the record that recalls Polish punk. The band are at their best when they keep it as simple as possible and really dig in to a hard riff; the over-complicated parts are more hit and miss, though they are badly served by the very thin production. "Piack" is the hit of the record, a down-tuned burner with the most vicious vocal performance and the best of the aforementioned mosh parts. Not a home run, but a solid release by a young band that will only get better. (AU)
(self-released)

JADED EYES – "The Eternal Sea" CD

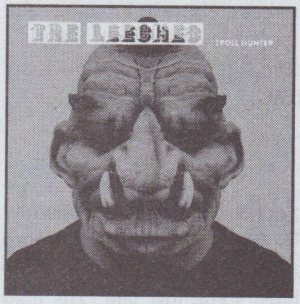
At the risk of skipping over the quality of the tunes contained in *The Eternal Sea*, I would be remiss if I failed to mention how shit hot this disc sounds. Screaming dirty Les Pauls lead a sonic assault that is sharp and precise—everything present, nothing dominating anything else, and vocals piercing the mix with power. All of this to deliver what are some pretty killer tracks that flow well as a full length release—ears towards '80s UK punk and early '90s US DIY / alt, but everything amped *way* the fuck up. Members of VOORHEES, SEX MANIACS, the HORROR, and many more, in case you keep track of suck things. (WN)
(Boss Tuneage)

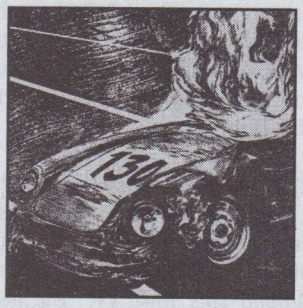
JILTED JOHN – "Going Steady / Jilted John"

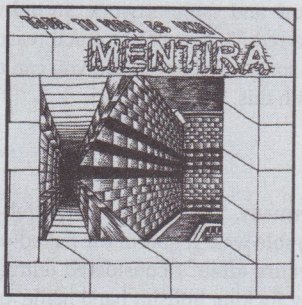
JILTED JOHN is Graham Fellows, who recorded this 7" when he was a drama student in England. Rabid Records released it in 1978. Both songs are goofy novelty love songs. The B-side, "Jilted John," ended up becoming a hit. It is the more self-deprecating of the two, with John losing his girlfriend Judy to Gordon because he is better looking, more cool, and trendy. John gets petulant and sings the chorus of *"Gordon is a moron"* while insulting Julie as a slut and Gordon as cheap. It's silly, but it is also amazingly catchy and relatable. EMI re-released the 7" in 1978 with the hit as the A-side. This is a reissue of the original Rabid Records version on army green colored vinyl. It comes as a bonus with the 40th anniversary reissue of JILTED JOHN's only album *True Love Stories*. The song "Jilted John" still sounds great today. "Going Steady" still sounds just OK. (CK)
(Boss Tuneage Retro)

JILTED JOHN – "True Love Stories" LP

I was really curious about this JILTED JOHN LP. I think the "Jilted John" novelty single that made our man John a one-hit wonder in England in '78 is fantastic: annoying, catchy, and stupid, the punk trifecta. But just how far can the conceit of the narrator's horny teenage boy persona be stretched? Well, there's a whole LP of material here, so I guess the answer







is pretty far. But whether it should be stretched to that point is a different question entirely. There's a line here and there that really hits—"There's a boy puking up in the lavat'ry / His name's Baz / It's his party"—but the whole thing is practically the definition of inessential. Really nicely done packaging, though, complete with a board game! (MF)
(Boss Tuneage Retro)

THE LAMPS – LP

THE LAMPS from OKC, not to be confused with LAMPS from LA, offer up twee pop that's awkward and off-kilter with soft fuzzy heart-melty tunes. Think LOIS of K Records. Perfectly chill. (CR)
(Synaptic Systems)

LAVENDER FLU – "Mow The Glass" LP

Sophomore offering from this truly top-tier PDX gang. For those unaware, LAVENDER FLU are helmed by one Chris Gunn, formerly of the HUNCHES, now flanked by buds from EAT SKULL and the BLIMP, along with the HUNCHES' Ben Spencer on drums to boot. While their expansive 2016 debut blew apart many brains (mine most definitely included), *Mow The Glass* is a distilled and more approachable take—a functional full-band outing rather than home-recording head trip—a record that I'm certain will prompt many more toward their cause. Having just seen the band play a few gigs, *Mow The Glass* is a totally perfect document of where this lot is at: focused and free, forging truly compelling rock'n'roll that draws from pop, folk, psychedelia, and (yes!) bursts of punk. Screachers like "Floor Lord" and "Dream Cleaner" are centered on Gunn's trademark guitar dynamism, altering between sweetness and fury in thoroughly impressive fashion, obliterating nearly all other moderne takes on whatever constitutes g-word punk in this fucked day and age. The more subdued moments are no less impressive, with wonderful performances that are just so inspiring, so fitting, immersive, and cool. World-class stuff here, folks... Absolutely essential!!! (MC)
(In The Red)

LAVENDER HEX – LP

You know something is good when it sounds like nothing and everything at the same time. I heard that Albert Einstein said if you're smart you steal, if you're not you copy. If you're good, you internalize your influences and make them your own in a way that no one can trace where you stole them from! I hear all these familiar sonic touchstones, but it doesn't sound like any one of them in particular. At first there's this whole GROUPER meets SLITS (because of the dub bass vibes and bedroom tape recording warmth) thing. Other times you get some of the spoken word political delivery and the sound of the early Crass Records... But unlike a lot of the Crass Record stuff, the vocal delivery is smooth, more like RICHARD JOBSON'S post-SKIDS soliloquies (see "Autumn") than the punk CRASS version of a hellfire baptist preacher. It's intelligent but not pretentious, it's politically oriented but not preachy. Plus they splice in some samples over some Messthetics-style drum machine beats (which sound great and different from the previous songs). The warm haze of European bedroom recordings from '82 but via a post-Riot Grrrl time machine. It sounds like what you would hope would develop from amazing sounds of yesteryear without sounding exactly like any of them. It's great! I love it. (P$)
(self-released)

LANDMINE HEART – "No Direction Home / White Line Fever"

Straddling the line between late '90s / early 2000s melodic punk and upbeat '90s rock'n'roll Oi! Almost like the BELTONES cross-pollinated with STRIKE ANYWHERE. (P$)
(Aggrobeat)

LEECHES – "Troll Hunter b/w I Don't Care/I Don't Know"

This is a release where the packaging pops out a lot more than the music. The colored plastic sleeve allows you to remove the inner sleeve to turn the four scary troll faces into the faces of the band members. It's one of the cooler packages I've seen on a 7" and is almost worth owning for that alone. The song "Troll Hunter" is a fun skate punk tune that recalls WIZO or MILLENCOLIN and ends with a RAMONES-tinged horror vibe. The B-side is bouncy, well-tuned pop punk. This Italian band really provides a great sample of themselves here, and it's worth taking a taste. (RH)
(Next Punk)

LIFE – "The Only One Earth" EP

With more than two decades under their belts, it should come as no surprise that Tokyo's LIFE have dialed bombastic crust to perfection... but even with that in mind, before I dropped the needle on "Equality Of All," I was floored. The churn and the unexpected hooks from Nori's bass only made the all-out fury that followed more intense, and the other three songs on *The Only One Earth* continue in a similar fashion. Fist banging Japanese crust with some of the best gravel dirt vocals in the business, and while I will mention hints of melody in these tracks, do not think for one second that LIFE have mellowed with age. Pure power and positive destruction. (WN)
(Hardcore Survives)

LITHICS – "Photograph, You Of / Lost Signal"

Everything about this tightly-wound single signifies precision of intent. Mirroring the disjointed grammar of the title, the first song begins with a repetitive bass figure that promises to take the song in a particular direction, but the drummer has other ideas. Following a by now familiar template of sparse rhythms, simple but stentorian bass lines, and glassy, staccato guitar interplay, LITHICS manage to deliver minimalism with maximum ideas: nothing extraneous yet wanting for nothing. One of the most difficult things in the world is to make repetition interesting, and LITHICS have got the knack. (AM)
(Thrilling Living)

LITTERBUG – "Countdown to Schadenfreude" EP

This UK pop punk group sounds probably very similar to Frank Carter-era GALLOWS if that band had decided to slow it down and go straight for the pop instead of hard, fast punk. This EP is just four tracks

from the full-length of the same name and same artwork, so unless you're specifically in the market for a red 7", there's not much reason to pick this up. If you're jonesing for some solid pop punk, you can do worse than to spend a few minutes with this. (RH)
(Just Say No To Government Music)

LÖTFETT / [...] – split EP

Two new-to-me barf buds from Germany, 'twould appear. Lottfett is scaly goth-tinged punk, barely memorable were it not for the puked-out vox, the (near) saving grace of the entire affair. I considered outright boycott of [...] due to their infuriating fucking bullshit band name, but have been lulled into slumber by their mediocrity. Hopefully they each make a dozen die-cut 10"s for me to slice my face off with. (MC)
(Phantom)

LOW CARD DE LA MUERTE – "El Paris Radio Massacre Sessions" CD

A blistering and beautiful Japanese fastcore assault in twenty movements (including four demo versions). Maximum energy, a taste of crossover in the delivery, enthusiastic gang vocals, occasional blasts, and an irreverence that is extremely refreshing. Highly recommended for punx and thrashers. (WN)
(Hardcore Kitchen)

MENTIRA – "Toda Tu Vida Es Una Mentira" EP

Intense and interesting hardcore EP from Kansas City. Burly bass tone and vocals are guided by impressive and steady drumming. I'm lured in by the tempo and rhythm changes that elevate this above most contemporary hardcore releases, as it keeps the songs from sounding contrived. Same goes for the cool interludes before "Nuestro Paisaje" and "La Tregua," which create sort of a push and pull, or even an ambiance, rather than a simple six-minute onslaught (which also can be cool). Imagine the unlikely mash-up of LOGICAL NONSENSE and UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE. Five quality tracks sung in Spanish (with English translations) with really cool art. (MA)
(Thrilling Living)

MIDNIGHT MINES – "Stations / Radio Dub"

Two humans make up this musical outfit, of which there is a connection to the great BLACK TIME. This is similarly stripped out otherworldly sounds, sort of like if some of the sorts from a Colin McInnes novel formed a group. Style / style / style; stripped down dreamscapes evoking London 1979, Cleveland 1975, a snotty squat in Camberwell Now! You know the drill, dubbed-out esoteric punk for socialist brutalists with a side of very early A CERTAIN RATION. (LG)
(Dichie Del Barone)

THE MIGHTY JABRONIS – "Put 'Em In A Headlock / Heartpunch My Heart"

Punk'n'Wrestling absurdity from Tennessee. "Headlock" is joke-dependent, crunchy pop punk, serviceable if only due to the faux-violent schtick they're pushin'. "Heartpunch" is much better than it has any real right to be, taking the squared circle's most infamous and oft-banned maneuver as inspiration for passable power pop. Should I work in a reference to "the top rope" before signing off here? Fuck my life. Oh... They're no MIGHTY IONS. (MC)
(Uh Huh)

THE MODS – "Reactions" LP

Whoa, hey, record of the month here. Sound scientists have generally accepted that marvelous mods the GIFT dropped the greatest record of 2017 when they let loose their surprisingly ambitious *Running Around This Town* LP. But here we have some lost late '70s mod magnificence. If you loved that GIFT record like I did, then you'll also be stoked about this. Think the JAM with a sprinkling of the CLASH, or if you want a more contemporary reference, think of the STATUES covering the JAM. Most importantly, it doesn't fall into the age old mod trap of being too whiny or complaining too much about women who have dumped them. This is the only record I've reviewed that I've immediately ordered in months. Highest recommendation. (P$)
(Ugly Pop)

MOMMY LONG LEGS – "Try Your Best" LP

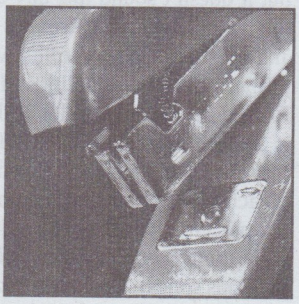
All sass and sticky lip gloss, Seattle-based MOMMY LONG LEGS is the perfect mess of glitter grrrl band and queer femme core. "Bitch Island," "Abortion," "Lube The System," and "Try Your Best" are some the tops on here. They have a true knack for sounding as sharp as a the pointed end of a licked-candy cane but still so soft and gooey on the inside. This is their first full-length release following their EP "Rock Product" and were featured on the *Typical Girls Volume 4* compilation. It's a tacky, sweet mess.(CR)
(Youth Racket)

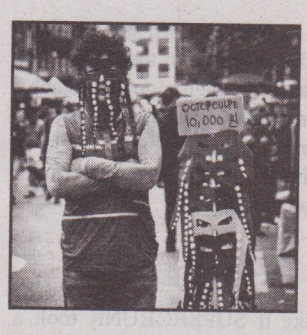
MOSQUITOES – "Drip Water Hollow Out Stone" 12"

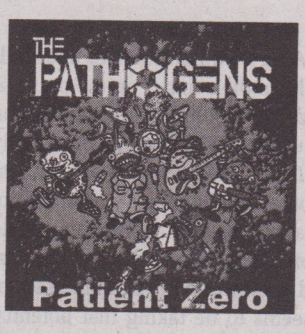
Barely reviewable in the context of *Maximum Rocknroll*, but so damn good that it had to go in. Pick your favorite "experimental" rock-based band—DEAD C or the earliest ROYAL TRUX recordings or, as the label suggests, US MAPLE—and you'll find some basis of comparison here. But even more than those references, MOSQUITOES take the idea of a "rock band" to its limits. Vocals and drums glance off each other incidentally as each track is propelled by a moving bassline and anxiety-provoking guitars. Difficult to parse, difficult to pin down, but easy to enjoy for fans of "difficult" listens. (MF)
(ever/never)

MOTORSAV – "Den Gule Dod" EP

Copenhagen's MOTORSAV definitely wear their hometown influences on their sleeves, most notably NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS and GORILLA ANGREB, but they take strides to create their own voice while creating instantly memorable punk. It stays melodic and driving while retaining grit, never falling over to the side of pop...much like early punk in the vein of ADOLESCENTS and the ZEROS. Four songs here and all of them are stellar. (GH)
(Elektriske Plader / Rusted Teeth)







NEGATIV – "Projections" LP

NEGATIV truly carries the torch of Norwegian hardcore punk. SVART FRAMTID would be proud. This LP hits hard, with fast, stompy riffs, lots of parts, and heavily reverb'd vocals. The mix of the guitar tone and vocal style just makes this album sound like pure evil—similar to ZOUO and GISM. Despite it being extremely short, this release packs a lot of punch and should not be slept on. (AJ)
(Byllepest / Ruin Nation / Sabotage)

NEGATIVE SEX – "Visions / Break Glass"

RENO-based, guitar driven post-punk. Guitars are way up front and slap back in a way similar to NERVOSAS, but NEGATIVE SEX is maybe more akin to CRIMINAL CODE energy-level-wise. Aside from some neat guitar lines there's nothing really noteworthy for me here, though it's a decent effort overall. (MA)
(Carbonated)

NOFX – "Ribbed Live In A Dive" CD

I must say I really enjoyed this. This is a live recording of the "Ribbed" LP in its entirety and in order. The sound is pretty damn tight and energetic on this melodic punk classic. The banter has it's funny moments as well. There is also a lead vocal guest appearance from Cody from TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET / LILLINGTONS. By now you should know if you like classic NOFX or not; for me, this is fun trip down memory lane. (RL)
(Fat Wreck)

NOPES – "Stapler" LP

If you live in Oakland, it looks like you've probably seen this band open for some of your favorite hot outta town bands touring thru. Looks like they've played some really cool shows. Sounds like some kids who go to Berkeley (or whatever local college is near you) and kinda got into AmRep or the LOCUST and the Oakland garage off-kilter noise charm of any of Max Nordile's bands (UZI RASH, etc.) that have fortunately been pervasive at Oakland shows for years. This is cool, albeit slightly overcooked. By doing so much and cooking it up this way, it feels more math-oriented than groove-oriented. It's frenetic, it's well played, and it's fast...but it never quite bangs in the way you hope it would. They have talent, and if they have the same frenetic energy live as they do on record they're probably a fun band to watch! (P$)
(Magnetic Eye)

NO PROBLEM – "Let God Sort Em Out" LP

Fast-paced super solid drumming that holds down some pretty cool guitar riffs that at times remind me of what was initially sick about WHITE LUNG. This is a toe-tapper. Somewhere between early WHITE LUNG and MASSHYSTERI but still its own thing. Has both the Deranged and Taken By Surprise (both labels that have endeared themselves to me) stamp of approval. I loved Deranged but stopped listening after a slew of chorus pedal-saturated, somewhat goth releases, but this is a return to the form that compelled me check out nearly everything the label was putting out for a couple year stretch. This one's a winner. It's got energy, sick riffs, and the people playing have both good taste and chops. One of the better things I've reviewed in a while. (P$)
(Deranged / Taken By Surprise)

OCTOPOULPE – "Man Won" LP

Technical hardcore that is giving me agita. Stop-and-go math riffs with some flashy jam riffs that never stay on one part long enough to become interesting. Like CROM TECH and MINUTEMEN covering PLASMATICS songs. Lots of repetitive lyrics that seem to be slipped in like hungover diary entries to break up the musical showmanship. This is for sure avant-garde but does not seem to have a purpose other than having fun and showing off. It is what it is, as they say: it is well played. Doesn't carry much heart or weight but is full of calculated mind warped music and shallow concepts. Fucking painful and impressively tight. I'd venture to say JAMES BROWN and MIKE PATTON would nod in approval. (JR)
(Crustatombe / 5FeetUnder / Gabu / Punti Scena / Rejuvenation / Ribé)

ORPHANAGE NAMED EARTH – "Re-Evolve" 2X LP

A hardcore album spliced up amongst two LPs. Two songs per side, eight songs. So, a lengthy endeavor for the genre. Each track is an epic traversing into abysmal depths of melancholy sadness and escapism. Passages of stampeding punk punctuate throughout. Moments where you think ORPHANAGE NAMED EARTH is going to do the expected, they hint at it, and fall back into sinister symphony. Post-punk drear slowly stitched up with a fine needle, followed by deep sutures of crust that come and go quite quickly staple it all together. This might be the dreamiest D-beat crust band ever. (JR)
(Dilapidated / Distro-Y / DIY Koło / Hasiok / Papagájův Hlasatel / Sanctus Propaganda)

PARASITE – "Reverberation" CD

Anthemic, mid-paced Japanese metal punk. A vocal growl reminiscent of the old guard, an overall approach that opts for tracks (and occasional grooves) instead of all-out fury. Eight cuts plus three bonus tracks from PARASITE's 2009 demo. (WN)
(Boss Tuneage)

THE PATHOGENS – "Patient Zero" EP

Gritty, melodic punk that sounds sincere and authentic in spite of the high production value. Jesse Luscious, of BLATZ and the CRIMINALS, shares vocal responsibilities with Cinder Block, who fronted TILT and RETCHING RED. The band's roots show through, hard. There's a kind of anachronistic combination of toughness and silliness that punks are rarely willing to play with anymore, and rather than being rehash, it's refreshing. The PATHOGENS re-define a very East Bay sound that drove the scene at 924 Gilman from the late '90s through the early '00s. It's a lot cleaner and slicker this time around, with significantly more screamin' guitar leads. Infectious, poppy riffs land somewhere between a GREEN DAY reference and nod to early GRIMPLE. I get the feeling that these guys are doing it because they can't help making the kind of music they love—rather than trying to cash in on a legacy. (HB)
(1986'd)

PETITE – "Torches" EP

Holy crap this record is so good! Angry, straightfoward, and mid-tempo, Portland's PETITE definitely have their finger on the pulse of something. The Oi!-influenced sound lands somewhere between an updated, less ridiculous take on streetpunk, and a less macho but equally passionate and anthemic version of DEFIANCE. The lyrics address themes of police brutality, domestic abuse, and fighting fascists. It's not always fun to be a person who cares about the world, when the world is dumpster fire of violence and oppression. But punk has a special way of making resistance feel fun and empowering even in the face of overwhelming opposition. PETITE seems to be taking that potential and running with it. (HB)
(Distort Reality)

PEZZ – "More Than You Can Give Us" LP

Holy shit, a new PEZZ LP! Despite a ton of member changes, a low record count, and just growing up and adulthood and shit, PEZZ has been around spewing dudely-yet-passionate pop punk with killer political lyrics for almost 30 years(!!!). So yeah, this record, recorded in 2012, sounds a little dated, but that ain't so bad. There's a lot going on here...three guitars, it sounds like every song has a different singer, wailing solos and *whooooooah-ohh-ohhs* with pick-slides everywhere, but to be honest, it's a pretty heavy hitter. It might not win over a ton of the younger *MRR* crowd, but old fans will be shitting their plastic pants, and I for one am pretty glad that they are still at going at it. (DZ)
(Truant)

PREENING – "Nice Dice" EP

Another fine new seven incher from the Bay Area's fave skronktastic three-sum. Propelled by muscular bass and skittish drums, singer / saxist Max Nordile is coming into his own as a hardcore BEEFHEART. This is the first PREENING record I'm aware of to include guitar, but fret not—the horn predominates still. Surely due for an LP? (AM)
(Fine Concepts)

PRESSOR – "Weird Things" CD

Weird things indeed. I have no idea what I did to deserve this as I'm neither a stoner nor a metal fan, so heavy sludgy stuff loses my attention fast. There's a ten-minute song called "Tripping Deep," for fuck's sake. What am I supposed to do with that? Did I mention there are synths too? I recommend getting the three-foot bong out of your closet for this one. Don't have one? Me neither. (MA)
(Bad Road Cogito / No Name/ V oron NEST)

THE PROLETARIAT – "The Murder of Alton Sterling / Push Back"

The PROLETARIAT stood out from the other bands from the Boston hardcore scene, or from all of the US punk and hardcore bands in the early '80s, like kind of a more aggressive WIRE. Both of their LPs and their comp tracks are totally striking and hold up as unique classics. Here we are over 30 years since their last release with a new 45 that is a pretty faithful continuation in sound, beginning with the exact bass tone in the lead in to "The Murder of Alton Sterling." This song sounds like it could be pulled right off of *Soma Holiday*, but I'd say releasing this is the A-side of a single was a good choice due to the strength of the song and the relevant message. It has all of their signature stabby guitar parts and exasperated vocal delivery, conveying the outrage we all feel about the injustices of police murder in the US. "Push Back" is not as memorable but a great song nonetheless. Really refreshing to see a great old band release a good new record. (MA)
(Bridge Nine)

PROUD PARENTS – LP

Jangly, poppy, cute punk. Almost like if SUPERCHUNK took a bunch of quaaludes and jokingly put out a folk punk record. You know, I really, *really* want to dislike this record, but their "too sweet and nerdy to care" attitude has won me over. Switch back'n'forth vocals and some sweet lo-fi indie harmonies. It's not super punk, but it's pretty fucking killer, and I'd like to hear more, please. (DZ)
(Dirtnap)

PURE PRESSURE – "Relampago de Furia" EP

This eight-song 7" is fast and unrelenting. On the mosh-to-circle-pit scale I'd say it's more on the circle-pit side of things—think SIDE BY SIDE and STOP AND THINK. The Toronto band's lyrics are political and as unashamed as the riffs: "*If alliance is compliance, then you can fucking keep it.*" There is a definite sense of urgency to this record—both the riffs and the lyrics get right to the point, cutting through the all-too-familiar pretentiousness in hyped bands of the same nature. (AJ)
(Painkiller)

RANDOM CONFLICT – "Ruin-Nation" CD

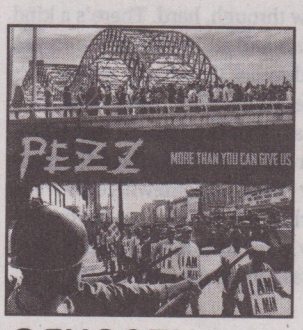
Thirty fucking years as a band and RANDOM CONFLICT has not let up one bit! If you can believe it, I think they've only gotten better! They use the tried and true method of writing about politics and life while never really talking about anything that specific so that you're able to apply their lyrics to literally any era of American politics. "Total Resistance." "They Can't Kill Us All." The band is constantly evolving musically, and these days, they are playing straight up hardcore with some heavy, dirge-y breakdowns that almost flirt with metal. A short and solid release. I'm looking forward to their next 30 years. (GH)
(No Profit)

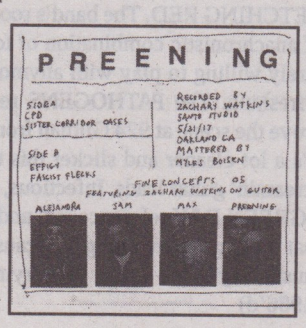
R.O.B.O. – "Negación" LP

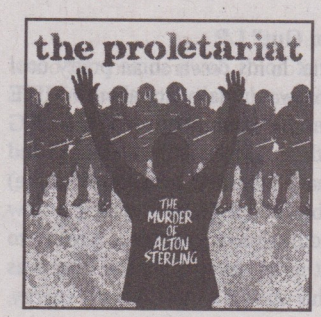
Madrid's R.O.B.O. delivers ten snotty, melodic tracks with straightforward punk sensibilities. Catchy and driving, a bit along the lines of RED DONS, the songs maintain an unrelenting frenetic energy complimented by extreme precision from the rhythm section. Most of the songs are barely over a minute long, and the occasional gang vocals add enough unpolished personality to keep it relatable. (HB)
(La Agonia De Vivir / Beat Generation)

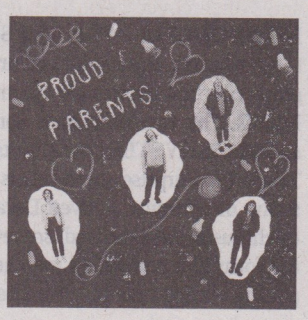
SCHIACH – LP

This is fucking great. Immediate, tense stabs of abrasive post-punk, punctuated by raw, desperate vocals. Propulsive, straightforward rhythms suggest an









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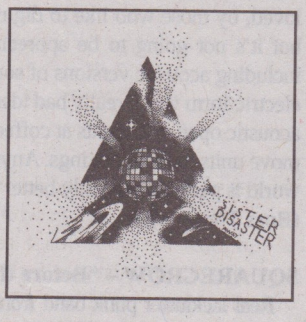


alternate history where KILLING JOKE recorded with RUDIMENTARY PENI and appeared on the *Bullshit Detector* comp. Comparisons (favorable) could be drawn with recent Euro acts like STRUCTURE and DIÄT. I should mention that the album comes with a very plush lyric (and translation) booklet. Can't recommend highly enough. (AM)
(Phantom)

SEAN PAWLEY – "The Ballad of St. Zita / Whip-poor-will at Dark"

Two noodly and meandering freakouts, recorded at SUN CITY GIRLS / SUPREME DICKS fidelity but without the sense of direction of either of those bands, saying something perhaps. It kind of works at times, and I'm sure if you dig SKIP SPENCE or any other burnt-out split ends on that untamed and carefree hairdo they call psychedelia you could twist a number to this. The vocals gave me a harder time, causing me at times to feel like I'd finally been cast into that special circle of open-mic hell to which anyone who's ever played a dobro is condemned. Maybe it's a grower. (EW)
(Free Odds)

SHARK INFERNO – "Terra Theia Baby Luna" CD

This is the most tepid, inane, uninspired bullshit I've heard in a few years. Somebody gave this motherfucker a wah pedal and apparently didn't point out that you can turn it off sometimes. The phoned-in, lazy vocals are repetitive, d-u-m-b as fuck and mixed so high in each song. SHARK INFERNO's songs are fourth-tier '90s alt-rock containing a couple of verses and choruses, but are dragged out for *way* too long in each one. There is a 26-page booklet included, which contains bad digital art. Just so we're clear, I hate this. (GH)
(self-released)

SISTER DISASTER – "Away" LP

Finland's SISTER DISASTER start off their debut LP with a fast, raging punk song before taking it down a notch and flirting with darkwave / goth. Singer Kaa sometimes sings in a reserved voice and then screams with pure rage in a way that keeps this record caustic and driving. The band builds on riffs in a cool way, with two guitars feeding off of each other to intensify the mood while the rhythm section work well together to anchor everything down. Killer LP. (GH)
(Several Casualties / Teen Wolf)

SKUM CITY – "Mass Grave" CD

You know, to be honest, with song titles like "Double Edged Dildo" and "Undercover Cock," I expected much, much worse. So much '80s skatey mosh stuff going on has got me all like "Is there a LUDICHRIST biopic that I don't know about?" I could do my research and find out if these lyrics are fucked up as hell, but for now I wanna believe they just wanna party like a maniac and mosh the blues away. (DZ)
(Knuckle Down)

SNAKE TONGUE – "Raptor's Breath" CD

I will describe this as metallic neo-crust from Sweden. Downtuned and screamy with hella complicated rhythms. MASTODON meets DISFEAR? I dunno...I didn't go to college and I hate math, so this album gave me a headache. (MA)
(The Sign)

SOMBRA DE LOBO – "Adelante En Espiral" LP

This is an one man recording project of Nuño Negro. This is the second LP as SOMBRA DE LOBO, which is an appropriate name for this. The music has a gothy, dark feel. The vocals are ominous. The vocal and guitar melodies are sweeping, but get crushed with the harshness of the artificial sounding drums. It is an interesting listen. I am sure I will again. (CK)
(Producciones Sombra)

SPAZZ – "Sweatin' To The Oldies (All The Out Of Print Stuff '93–'96)" 2xLP

Were I a young punk in 2018, I imagine I would be sick and fuckin' tired of people telling me about how goddamn important and influential goddamn SPAZZ were back in the day. Many a hagiography has been written about their genre-bending forays into hip-hop, the witty and incisive scene commentary via lyrics, the technical mastery combined with the sense of humor and so on and so on. Indeed, Ken Sanderson's piece in the beautifully laid-out booklet included with this collection is probably the best of such. The important question is this: does SPAZZ still hold up in 2018? The answer is a resounding yes. For a band that was so incredibly prolific (this collection includes 64 songs, and that's not nearly everything that they recorded in the titular four-year period), there's hardly a stinker in the bunch, thanks both to the band's signature triple-vocalist attack and the sheer diversity of styles that they dabbled in. From grating sludge to metallic thrash to all-go blasting powerviolence to the infamous banjo and mouth-harp interludes, SPAZZ were the masters of crafting an engaging suite of songs for a split record, with the impeccably sourced samples being the icing on the cake. The important thing to keep in mind with this collection is that nobody, least of all the members of SPAZZ, intended for you to have to sit down and listen to 64 SPAZZ songs in a row. Compiled here are a raft of recordings that were meant to be bite-sized. That being the case, these are records that you can pick up and put down with abandon. Pick a side, hell, pick half a side, and dig in. The second it feels like too much, you can pull it off and put it on again later. Certain types of punk purists are never going to get or enjoy SPAZZ, and that's perfectly fine. But if you are at all interested in the heavier side of hardcore, and especially if you have an interest in the West Bay Cartel / Coalition, this is an essential record, complete with all the published lyrics for you to puzzle and guffaw over. (AU)
(Tankcrimes)

THE SPOILERS – "Recently Re-Released" CD

A collection of most (all?) of the recorded material of this NOFX-inspired poppy hardcore band. The drums are always playing twice as fast as you think they should, in that Fat Wreck sort of way. The singing is thankfully not that whiny. Guitars are loud and competent and generally not too overdone. The kind of music where the guys (always guys) wear frontwards baseball caps on stage. This is not bad, but it doesn't have any sort of "it" factor. *Recently Re-Released* will be appreciated, perhaps even

loved, by those who like to dig really deep into this particular sub-genre, but it's not going to be appreciated (or loved) by anybody else. Note: including acoustic versions of songs already included earlier on the CD in electric form was a really bad idea, but perhaps these guys sometimes play acoustic open mic nights at coffeehouses and need some acoustic merch to move units in those settings. Anyways, this is a reasonable release, and the world is perhaps a slightly better place because it exists. (MR)
(Boss Tuneage)

SQUARECROW – "Before the Sun Catches Us All" LP

Real lackluster punk band from San Diego, California. I don't know shit about BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN, but I know when a mediocre band tries to do the "hey, we love the Boss" sound. I really wish that this band had some hooks, or anything to draw me in...anything, anything, anything... As if that wasn't bad enough, their song "Date Me!" had me cringing. The story of the nice guy who,—oh guess what?—happens to be a mess, and then—oh no—doesn't get the girl. Lines like "*I would be here till I die, even if that means that I am on the sideline*" and "*so come find me, confide me, and love me, don't ever let me leave / be my dream, a nightmare to wake me*" had me yawning, and just straight up annoyed that I even had to listen to this at all. They want to sound like the GASLIGHT ANTHEM, late AGAINST ME! or anything by ALKALINE TRIO post-2004, which I would gladly listen to over this. (RS)
(La Escalera / Swamp Cabbage)

STRANGE PASSAGE – "Shine and Scatter" LP

Vinyl pressing of a 2016 Massachusetts demo brimming with jangling laments, harkening back to sad '80s trips such as CHAMELEONS (UK), and perhaps the CURE or early Creation Records groups like the LOFT. The singer's plaintive and unaffected style also reminds this listener of FOR AGAINST, carving inventive melodies out of space where other bands using this much chorus might have been content to stick to the lowest couple of notes in their register. Parts of this even sound like the SOFT BOYS, neo-psychedelic riffing unabashed about getting a little bit free. Promising material, hoping there's more where this came from. (EW)
(Syncro System)

STRUNG OUT – "Black Out the Sky" CD

Venerable, if not venerated, STRUNG OUT usually plays progressive pop punk that is so off the charts in terms of musicianship that it doesn't even make you want to puke. This is not that. Instead, what this is is semi-acoustic, semi-sensitive rock music made for fans of STAIND and ALICE IN CHAINS who want to spin something that will make them look smart when their cousin who goes to college comes over. In other words, this might be decent walk-up music for a baseball player on a team you despise, but other than that, avoid it. I mean, really avoid it. A terrible, terrible, terrible CD. (MR)
(Fat Wreck)

SU19B – "Neutralize" LP

One of Japan's longest-running doom outfits continue their exploration of the abysmal depths with their third LP (or fourth if you include a split). SU19B follows the harsh, slow path of acts like THORR'S HAMMER, DISROTTED, or even CORRUPTED (at least the non-LP tracks) by creating thick, almost impenetrable walls of slow-burning heaviness. But SU19B breaks the mold created by other doomsters through much quicker passages that implement tremolo-picking and blastbeats. While in the past their faster moments have led to ties with the powerviolence / grind scene (they're on a *Reality* comp and have splits with XBRAINIAX, JENNY PICCOLO, and SEA OF SHIT), here these feel like the putrid bastard child of AUTOPSY or other downtuned, slower death metal acts. The sound quality here is good, the riffs are solid, and fans of heavy music will find much to like here. However, it is likely that not many punks will enjoy the brutality here. They may enjoy the sluggish BATHORY cover attached at the end, though. (JD)
(Regurgitated Semen / SPHC)

SUPERBEAN – "Shit Show" LP

Apparently we have an internet sensation on our hands. SUPERBEAN / BEAN are a long running mod / punk three piece outta SoCal. If we're to believe their one-sheet, their punk parody here "Fuck Youth" had half a million views on YouTube. I looked and all I can find is 30,000 views, but maybe something happened with the cuss words. Anyway, this is what you hope your band could sound like when your friends are all dads and you played in bands in the '90s. Somehow all reminds me of *That Thing You Do!* and the WONDERS. (GB)
(Vaguely Profound)

TERRESTRIALS – LP

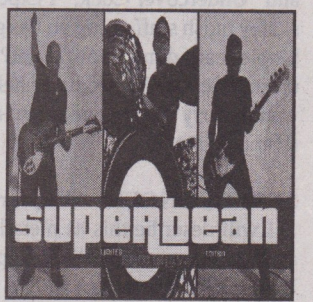
Late-nite shite from Ohio, boasting firm connections to that whole Columbus Discount sect, oft-celebrated by nerds of recent vintage (like me). These 'Ials are loosy-goosy psych-punk of the drug-party variety. Lead-off rouser "Aman Dude" spins an alien yarn with an overt nod to ROKY ERICKSON, which I can't help but dig (yes yes, I tried to hate it). Other tunes lumber beefily into that darkest of night, where the only light source is the corner store's brew cooler. No friends? This one's for you. (MC)
(Heel Turn)

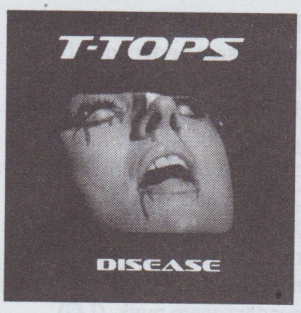
TRAUMA 84 – "Pachuť Šílenosti" EP

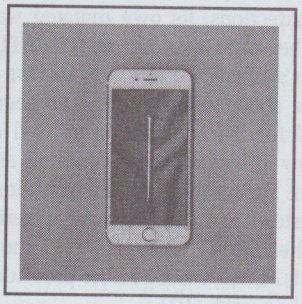
This release from the Czech Republic crust band is a little all over the place, so it's hard to compare it overall to anyone one particular band, but I think it's safe to say that if you like AMEBIX and BATHORY there's something in here you would like. I definitely appreciate the English translations in the insert, which give you some context into what they're screaming about. Most of the lyrics are about internal struggles. The second song, though, I think has the most importance. The title translates to "Proper Czechs," and it denounces racism and nationalism. (AJ)
(Animator / Deadly Illness / Dis-Srot / GRF / PHR / Svab / Veva)

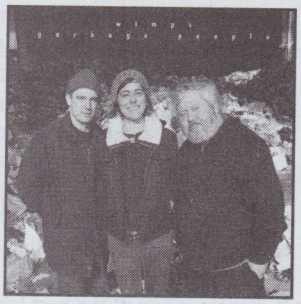
TRISTESS – "Hardcore Demos" LP

Shocker, this LP compiles TRISTESS's first two demos along with two tracks from an early compilation appearance and a seemingly unreleased ANTI-CIMEX cover. One one hand, this is a great-looking record with a killer layout and everything on here is delivered with high energy and an enjoyably dirty, demo-quality sound. On the other









hand, very few songs have a really great hook or other feature that the listener can hold on to. There are a couple of certified bangers ("Lögn" practically jumps of the vinyl at you), and the frantic cover of "En Död Soldat" is everything you'd want it to be, but overall there's a distinct lack of memorable moments. There are both better TRISTESS records and better records on D-Takt & Råpunk available, that's for sure. Our limited edition copy came on banana yellow vinyl and included a set of TRISTESS-branded guitar picks (or plectrums, if you will). (AU)
(D-Takt & Råpunk)

T-TOPS – "Disease" EP

Propulsive sludgy metal with an industrial drive and vocal intensity that reminds me of early MINISTRY, of all things. Three songs here that veer into the realm of schlock-horror fantasy, but the tight, brutal riffage is delivered with impact, brevity, and a definite lack of pomp or pretense. (AM)
(Magnetic Eye)

UNCONTROLLABLE URGE – LP

Don't let the name fool you, this band does not sound like DEVO. Don't let the heavily reverbed vocals fool you, either, because this is not wild and loose, but actually very precise. Not too far outside of the sort of dark wave stuff you might find on Deranged, but not as dark and not as wave. Really good *da-na-na-da-na-na-da-na* chompers in the realm of X's "Nausea," but perhaps a little overboard on that style (even X only did that once, right?). Features several members of TV FREAKS, but singer Angie Lanza (not in TV FREAKS) is the band's driving force. A highly listenable debut long-player. Canadian. (MR)
(Schizophrenic)

LA URSS – "Nuevo Testamento" LP

Those middle-'00 years left us with some serious bangers. PELIGRO SOCIAL from SF, the crews from København and their Swedish neighbors in bands like VICIOUS and MASSHYSTERI dropped classic, lasting, tuneful punk that is still on regular rotation for many folks. But what next...? Did bands go the typical and boring route of drunk punk rock'n'roll? Move on to a more commercial sound and go for the paycheck? Just fade away and get on with living? Enter: LA URSS. A late decade Spanish offering in that flurry of killer, catchy punk, it wasn't just the records that made an impact, it was the intense energy of their live shows...and now they've grown up. *Nuevo Testamento* indeed feels like the beginning of a new chapter, one written by seasoned veterans not afraid to slow down, not afraid of acoustic guitars, veterans who have let that youthful fire ignite the coals that now warm their very core. The energy bleeds from tracks like "Non Plus Ultra" even as the song itself portrays a mellower LA URSS. Don't expect speed, don't expect venom, this is definitely an adult LA URSS, but the point is that it is still very definitely LA URSS, and seeing a band progress so successfully is refreshing. (WN)
(MMM / Todo Destruido)

VLACK – "The Way Of The Cross" CD

How does one begin the daunting task of trying to describe something that sounds like a mix of like post punk, death rock and somehow '90s alternative. Do you like CAT PARTY and PEARL JAM? Then part of the reason you're here on this Earth could be to listen to something like this. (P$)
(Ripper)

WIMPS – "Garbage People" LP

Seattle's WIMPS peddle a familiar line in quirky, peppy, stripped down pop songs. Unafraid of a little wimpy fun, but avoiding love song pop cliche, they extol the virtues of neanderthal cave life, stealing pizza, and bees, among other subjects. Reminiscent of the DEAD MILKMEN, PANSY DIVISION, or any number of less-punk '90s Lookout! bands, this is a decent grip for anyone that doesn't need their punk to be so serious. (AM)
(Kill Rock Stars)

XURS – "Cheap Future" LP

It's a shame that it takes so long for this record to get going. The first track is sort of a peppy, up-tempo punk tune that sits somewhere around HÜSKER DÜ or the ADOLESCENTS, but the monotone vocals and lack of a catchy riff make it hard to get into. They move from there into some even more upbeat stuff. It's a little faster, a little catchier, almost like a harder version of VOLCANO SUNS, but it's not until the fourth song that they really hit their stride. "Problems Don't Solve Themselves" is the real winner here. It's more in the MISSION OF BURMA realm. The song is mid-tempo, the guitars are just a little off kilter, the vocals reach a little further from the middle, and the dynamic range feels like it has expanded. The rest of the record follows in one of those veins but the stand outs tend to be those mid-tempo post-punk jams. (PA)
(self-release)

V/A – "Damaged Goods 1988-2018" 2xCD

The label Damaged Goods celebrates its 30th anniversary with this double CD collection. It's pretty much a greatest hits collection with songs from JOHNNY MOPED, THEE HEADCOATS, THEE HEADCOATEES, the REVILLOS, the BUDGET GIRLS, PERIOD PAINS, THEE SPIVS, J CHURCH, HELEN LOVE, COWBELL, and many more. Thirty-five songs in all. It's a great introduction to the label, but for those of us who have been fans for a long time it's a too predictable. You probably have most of these records already. I know I do. It comes with a booklet that has photos of each record included on the compilation plus a list of every band on the label. That's 30 years, 500 releases, 168 bands. It's pretty impressive. A history of the label would have been a nice addition for the booklet, though I imagine it would probably go, "we like these bands so we put out their records." Congrats on 30, Damaged Goods. Here's to 30 more. (CK)
(Damaged Goods)

V/A – "Infection 1" 2 x EP

As the liner notes state, "[i]n the meta schizoid hive mind of 2018 we are all infected carriers spreading the infection and there is no way back..." This brief four-way split by NEGATIV from Norway, Colombia's MURO, GAZM from Canada, and the US's own BLANK SPELL is a tight document of how international punk currently works

together and forms its own hybrid infections, its own mutated way to deliver barbed missives against the status quo. Or as NEGATIV notes in their lyrics, *"they control / let's infect / we'll infect / decontrol / everything."* There's a ton to praise about this comp: the gorgeous screenprinted art, the bands selected for the compilation as well as their stylistic differences, the somehow filthy yet clear recordings, and the songs themselves, all of which are impeccable. My minor critique is BLANK SPELL's side, which instead of including new material consists of four tracks culled from their 2014 demo. However, those four songs rip. So should you buy this? Fuck yeah. Further proof that Byllepest is one of the best labels in the world. (JD)
(Byllepest)

V/A – "Punk Rock Raduno Vol. 3" LP

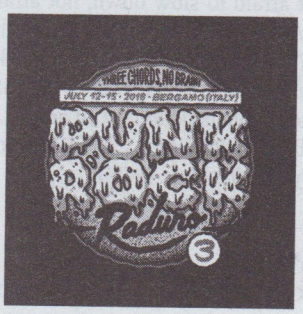
Like most festival comps, this collection for an Italian punk festival is a little all over the place. Unless you attended the festival and want a memento, there's not much reason to pick this up. That said, there are some standouts that I'm going to start digging around for more music from. PATSY'S RATS deliver "Lookin' At Your Phone," a delightful rocker, with some top tier oohs and aahs. The SEWER RATS are like the German NERF HERDER on "Rocket to Usher." The duel vocals and silly goofiness of EVEN IN BLACKOUTS' cover of the MONKEES' "Randy Scouse Git" is pure fun. The BOMBPOPS are just good, and the duel front women rip it up. The comp is closed out in a wonderfully rough way by the DUTTS who sound to me like the German answer to the SPITS. (RH)
(Punk Rock Raduno)

V/A – "Typical Girls Volume 3" LP

If you've jammed any other volume of Typical Girls, assembled by *MRR* shitworker Camylle Reynolds for Emotional Response Records, you'll already expect this to cover a lot of ground in female-fronted DIY punk. On this LP you'll hear the ANGRY SAMOANS-esque toxic beach slamming of JUDY AND THE JERKS, the spidery post-punk of FITNESS WOMXN, the tightly-wound hardcore of C.H.E.W., snotty garage punk from SICK BAGS, one of the very best tracks that Kansas City funky monks WARM BODIES have put forward, and much more. You even have several very different kinds of synth-pop on here, between the spectral and ephemeral bedroom pop of SCAREDY SNAKE and a more dancefloor-ready and anthemic cut from KAREN MEAT. There's something for everybody, and sure, everybody might hear something that's not for that particular anybody, but that something is definitely going to be *somebody's* something. I'd venture that any listener dropping a needle on this will come back trying to track down the back catalog of at least two or three groups they've never heard before and wishing they could find more comps of contemporary bands that left them with that kind of excitement. (EW)
(Emotional Response)

V/A – "Typical Girls Volume 4" LP

A new continuation in the epic and amazing series of snapshots into female-identified punk from around the globe with styles swooping through every DIY punk possibility; there is something for everyone on these comps. The day-glo swing of L.A.'s FRENCH VANILLA, the doomed style of London's ES, the electro-snot perfection of Swiss punks COUTEAU LATEX, and that's just a few of those experimenting in the vast swathe of sounds summed up by the lazy phrase post-punk! There are wild deconstructed punker sounds from Oakland supergroup NEON and the more classic style of Spain's DECRANEO and CHROMA, plus some HC from NO LOVE and REPLICA, and of course the pop punkers are represented by MOMMY LONG LEGS and the PRIMITIVES. There are many more groups on here! All of these comps are a great way to pick up on what is happening in the worldwide DIY scene and not at all an exercise in gender=genre punk. (LG)
(Emotional Response)



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Dirtnap: dirtnaprecs.com, P.O. Box 7533, Madison, WI 53707
Distort Reality: distortreality.storenvy.com
DIY Kolo: diykolorecords.bandcamp.com
D-Takt & Råpunk: dbeatrawpunk.blogspot.com, Box 55, 832 21 Frösön, Sweden,
Elektriske Plader: elektriskeplader.com
Emotional Response: jenandstew.com
La Escalera: laescalerarecords.bandcamp.com
ever/never: evernever-records.bandcamp.com
Fast Decade: fastdecaderecords.com
Fat Wreck: fatwreck.com
Fine Concepts: fineconcepts.org
Fish: lumpyrecords.com
Free Odds: freeodds.bigcartel.com
Gabu: asso.gabuzomeu.bz
Get Better: PO Box 19267, Philadelphia, PA, 19143, getbetterrecordsnh.limitedrun.com
Hardcore Kitchen: hck@hck.sakura.ne.jp
Hardcore Survives: hardcore-survives.com
Hasiok: hasiokrecords.bandcamp.com
Heel Turn: heelturnrecords.com
Hotline TNT: 4437 Portland Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55407, (747) 243-1524
Humaniterrorist: humaniterrorist.tumblr.com
I Dischi Del Barone: iddb.se
In The Red: intheredrecords.com
JAD: jadpunk.bandcamp.com
Just Say No To Government Music: jsntgm.com
Kill Rock Stars: killrockstars.com, 107 SE Washington St, Ste 155, Portland, OR 97214
Kitschy Spirit: kitschyspirit.com
Knock Out: knock-out.de
Knuckle Down: knuckledownrecords.com
Lavender Hex: lavenderhex.bandcamp.com
Lumpy: lumpyrecords.com
Magnetic Eye: merhq.net
MMM: discosmmm.storenvy.com
Near Dark: neardarkoakland.bandcamp.com
Next Punk: nextpunk.bandcamp.com
No Name: noname666.bandcamp.com
No Profit: noprofitrecords.storenvy.com
Osu!: theclinch.band
Painkiller: painkillerrecords.com, 7 Meacham Road, Cambridge, MA 02140
Perpetua Edizioni: perpetuaedizioni.tumblr.com
Phantom: phantom.tk
PHR: phr.cz
Pirates Press: 1260 Powell St, Emeryville, CA 94608 piratespressrecords.com
Producciones Sombra: sombradelobo.bandcamp.com
Punk Rock Raduno: punkrockraduno.com
Regurgitated Semen: % Sandro Gessner, Strasse des Friedens 45, 07819 Mittelpoellnitz, GERMANY, rsrec.bigcartel.com, skrupel@web.de
Rejuvenation: rejuvenationrecords.com
Revelation: revhq.com
Rusted Teeth: teethrusted@gmail.com
Sabotage: sabotagerecords.net
Sanctus Propaganda: sanctuspropaganda.com
Schizophrenic: schizophrenicrex.com
Several Casualties: facebook.com/severalcasualties
Shark Inferno: Sharkinferno.bandcamp.com
The Sign: thesignrecords.bandcamp.com
Society Bleeds: chimichanga.storenvy.com
Specious Arts: instagram.com/specious_arts
SPHC: sphc.bigcartel.com
Squidhat: Squidhat.bandcamp.com
SRA: srarecords.com
Swamp Cabbage: swampcabbagerecords.com
Synaptic Systems: sysy.com
Syncro System: partynogg@gmail.com, 1443 Wacon Dr, Troy, MI 48083
Taken By Surprise: takenbysurpriserecords.wordpress.com
Tankcrimes: tankcrimes.com
Teen Wolf: teenwolfrecords.com
THC & DIY: thcanddiyrecords.bandcamp.com
Thrashin': losinductores.bandcamp.com
Thrash Unreal: thrashunrealrecs.bandcamp.com, thrashunrealrecs@gmail.com
Thrilling Living: thrillingliving.com
Todo Destruido: tododestruido.blogspot.com
Toxic State: Toxicstaterecords.com
Truant: pezzmemphis.bandcamp.com
Ugly Pop: uglypop.bigcartel.com
Uh Huh: uhhuhrecords.bandcamp.com
Vaguely Profound: superbeanmusic.com, moremarkable67@gmail.com
Vulgar: vulgarrecords.com
Wet Spinach: wetspinach.bandcamp.com
Wooaaargh: wooaaargh.bandcamp.com
XURS: xursrock.bandcamp.com
Youth Riot: youthriotrecords.com

CONTACTS

DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(GH) Greg Harvester
(JR) Jason Ryan
(JB) Julia Booz
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MR) Matt Reynolds
(MD) Michael De Toffoli
(RS) Ramy Silyan
(WN) Robert Collins

B.E.T.O.E – *Adelanto Nuevo* – Raw bombastic D-beat with echoing vocals and gurgling strings. The drums are muffled and reminiscent of UK '90s crust before everything like this was viled [*sic*] under the D-beat category. B.E.T.O.E. sound like they are playing deep at the end of a sewer drain blasting SHITLICKERS garbage. BESTOVEN, NUCLEAR DEATH TERROR, DROPEND, BATTLE OF DISARM also come to mind. Excellent offering with classic riffs, a few original change ups that feel a bit more anarcho à la DIRT also coming through, all for your earslaugher leanings from Venezuela and Brazil. The last track, "Dictadura / Represion," fucking rips! (JR) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, betoerawpunk.bandcamp.com)

BUBBLE BOYS / WHATEVER ANYWAYS – *split* – Might be shit-fi garage rock recorded poorly over an R&B cassette on the BUBBLE BOYS side. Irish folk fiddle set to commercial techno on the WHATEVER ANYWAYS side, although I think there was some attempt to record some kind of shitty punk sound over the tape's original contents. (WN) (??-song cassette, lyrics not included, no contact info / no loss)

CHILL PARENTS – *Hail ACAB* – I'm not super versed in this realm of the punk landscape but my first inclination was that fans of LATTERMAN and RVIVR would respond well to this album. Melodic and catchy pop punk with rough-around-the-edges vocals, interspersed with full-on screaming. The lyrics are about desolation and struggle, and what makes it stand out is the regular insertion of sampling. It got my attention to suddenly hear Angela Davis speaking on violence drenched with reverb and guitars. (JB) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, chillparents.bandcamp.com)

THE DODGES – *Roll With The Dodges* – High quality, high energy California punk in the classic(?) '90s skate rock/ W arped tradition. Touches of RANCID and BLINK-182 while copious street punk homages abound. (WN) (7-song CDr, lyrics not included, thedodgesband@gmail.com)

DRAMA – *Dreamy Radical Anxious Magical Angels* – Seeing this band was a highlight in my musical landscape in the end of 2017. They were either out of tapes or hadn't released one yet, I'm not sure, but I bought a 2" pin with a sadgirl clown and a butterfly on it and another one that simply said "Audre Lorde." The six songs on this tape are all fairly succinct (except the last one, which trails on, sounding like continuing to dance with a loved one even though they have died in your arms) and they all range considerably in speed and style but are catchy, noisy, and driving. The emotional range and passion of vocalist / guitar player Monica continues to be inspiring and engaging after I've flipped the tape fifteen times. With a band this interesting I'm kinda depressed the lyrics aren't listed, but if you listen to this tape over and over again as I have been, you can discern the crucial subject matter. (JB) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, omgdrama.bandcamp.com)

GREEN KID – I realize that the alt radio sounds of the '90s were created a lifetime ago, but it still feels strange to hear new bands look to them for influences. Wisconsin's GREEN KID are polished, professional, and very good—they sound like any guitar driven band I might have heard on the big city modern rock station when I moved to California. And I would have thought "whoa, cool, this isn't ACE OF BASE" and then I would have popped in a GRIMPLE tape. (WN) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, allgonoslow@gmail.com)

HOARDER – *Live on KAOS* – Olympia hardcore / fastcore in a live setting and completely awesome. Live recordings can always be hit or miss and this one definitely catches the band's live energy while not sounding like a muddy mess recorded inside of a boot. Vocals are maniacally screamed to the point of near blowout while the band plays full-on-attack-style hardcore that will make you wanna go out and kill your nearest Nazi. (GH) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, hoarderoly.bandcamp.com)

THE HORRIFICS – *Spirit Box* – Catchy sing-along uptempo and upbeat punk, the kind that grownups who grew up on catchy skate punk and / or SAMHAIN seem to inevitably make when they turn into grown ups. (WN) (6-song CDr, lyrics not included, thehorrifics.bandcamp.com)

HORSE GIRL – *Delightfully Tacky Yet Unrefined* – Minneapolis' HORSE GIRL plays melodic punk in the rough and tumble style that you (I?) always wish it was played: breakneck speeds, raw, fucked up, queer, dirty and completely DIY. Self-loathing and desperate yet still optimistic lyrics relay stories of broken hearts, the wanderlust of trimming economy, being drunk and smoking something like 85 cigarettes in a row. You wanna get real or not? (GH) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, horsegirlmpls.bandcamp.com, Disgraceland, 2616 15th Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55407)

LEATHER WEAPONS – *Steel Freaks* – Finland's LEATHER WEAPONS blasts out their first three-song demo and it's a banger... some might even say a *creamer.* Their first song walks the line between punk and straight up rock, making me think of both MOTÖRHEAD and the STOOGES before they drop into some Finnish-ass D-beat for the remainder of the cassette, rabidly extolling the virtues of being tough and lifting weights. Trust me when I say that it rips. (GH) (3-song cassette, lyrics included, leatherweapons.bandcamp.com)

MINIMA – *Mercuria* – Not to be confused with the Barcelona band of the same name (I got confused), Athens, Georgia's MINIMA plays tempered, sober, and sedate indie-punk. Their song "Out Displace" is bouncy, almost-angry and energetic...possibly the only song on here that could be considered a punk song, while the others are toe-tapping and tuneful, but just remind me of some light head bobbing at the 40 Watt on a Thursday night. (GH) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, minimarock.bandcamp.com)

MOIRA SCAR – *Wound World Part 1* – Whoa, this is not what I was expecting at all. I have enjoyed the MOIRA SCAR *Scarred For Life* LP since its release, which was not nearly as dismal and discomforting, laid thick with pulverizing gothic doom chords. TOTEM, BRUME, THORR'S HAMMER come to mind, and moves on into brighter *Twin Peaks* soundtrack placeboes. Wretched bestial moaning vocals are complemented by operatic vocals, like early CONTROPOTERE betwixt with SHADOW PROJECT and *Les Miserables*. I'm sure it's intentionally composed, but the slightly off pitch progressions really bend the ear and bury the soul. Is there a term for music being "grave-gazer?" Graced with a bit of trilling alto sax on here too. Limited to 100 rich red tapes. Very good! (JR) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, moirascar.bandcamp.com)

NIDSTANG – *Angstloch* – Brutal solo BM project from Olympia. The driving HC / punk feel of mercurial predecessors like BONE AWL, but NIDSTANG are in your face and relentless from start to finish. No nuance or casually evil stomps, here, this is a full force punk / death / black metal hybrid of the highest order. (WN) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, no contact information)

POLLUTED BRAIN – I fuckin' love this. A hardcore punk band that's trying to be....a hardcore punk band. And they are succeeding. Smart riffs, sharp attack, pissed and strong, fast and *punk*. Five tracks including an on-point NECROS cover. Sold. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, c/o 112 Cliffefield Rd., Sheffield S89DN, United Kingdom; b_suddaby@hotmail.co.uk)

PROJECT GBG – *Demo 2018* – Tortuous, sizzling, raw chaotic D-beat from Canada. The stand-out sound here is the post-punk unsettling dissonant guitar tones on ten-second CIMEX-esque solos. Cascading, tumbling, torrential floor tom rolls à la BOMBANFALL. Totally gruesome loose and pungent, scorched vocals that are like an enslaved vulturous Haryhausen monster in agony, er, I mean, the band DISTRESS. You gotta have it. (JR) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, blacxkonflik.blogspot.com)

SCANNER – *In Your Head* – Like if your dad had an embarrassing punk band that still played shows at a sports bar, and he thought it was OK to keep going just because he and his buddies had been doing it for a long time. Like 39 years. (WN) (5-song CD-R, lyrics not included, scanner1979.com)

SCIENCE MAN – *Demo 2018* – Arcade alchemy from Buffalo, NY. Buzzing, whirling industrial carnivalistic beats with robotic vocals about the future, cyber gods, Stephen Hawking, a JC-15, and monsters. Reminds of the FALL, the REATARDS, the MUMMIES, MINISTRY, OMD (*Dazzle Ships* era) and the music of *Castlevania*. Mostly recorded in a moving van, according to the liner notes. With only the two small nautical windows on each side? Sounds like it. (JR) (6-song-cassette, lyrics included, morepowertapes.bandcamp.com)

SLOW MUTANTS – Endearing, subdued 2016 recording. A quiet urgency with haunting vocals until SLOW MUTANTS stomp on the pedals and launch into fierce, stripped down indie sounds with a basement energy. High quality, well constructed. (WN) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, drugparty.bandcamp.com)

TECHNO – Fast punk, raw and pissed and simple, with unnecessarily affected vocals and a piss poor reproduction on the cassette that makes TECHNO sound more fucked up than they probably intended. Ultra straightforward DISCHARGE construction, mid tempo "I Don't Want To Starve" is one of the best bangers of the month. (WN) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, technobluejug@gmail.com; technopunk.bandcamp.com)

VOL – The first installment from these Oakland improv fuckers who have also brought you the BLUES (same members), UZI RASH, NOTHING BAND, MOZART, GSP and many more. Haunting, live sax / guitar / clarinet (?) improvisations in which the setting also feels like its own instrument. More like Peter Brötzmann and Marshall Allen than DISCHARGE. (GH) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, vvooll.org)

YOU AND ALL YOUR FRIENDS ARE DEAD – Short bursts of technical mosh metal with blast beats. It all comes off very professional, which is not to say it isn't good. (WN) (13-song cassette, lyrics not included, ampericalrecordings.bigcartel.com)

ZINES

Send zines for review to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA. Include postpaid price within the US and internationally. We are always looking for multi-lingual zine reviewers who are based in the US. Write to zines@maximumrocknroll.com for information.

(AK) Arthur Katrina
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(GJ) Griffin Jones
(GM) Gina Murrell
(JA) Joshua Kay
(JD) Joan DeToro
(MF) Miranda Fisher
(NR) Nimmy Ramona
(RH) Ryan Hertel
(YD) Evie Deller

ASYMETRICAL ANTI-MEDIA #1
$1 / stamps / trade / 8 pgs
This is a nice, compact review of a couple dozen-plus new zines and mail artists from all over the US and Canada. There is some slight commentary from the author, but it's more of a directory than anything. It's definitely worth checking out if you're looking for some new things that you likely wouldn't stumble across otherwise. (RH)
Jason Rodgers, PO Box 10894, Albany, NY 12201

A BEGINNERS' GUIDE TO BIZARRO FICTION
$1 / 12 pgs
So of course, we all know that there's some good, slightly off—but well thought out—fiction out there, and you can find it if you look hard enough, but I didn't know it had its own name now—Bizarro Fiction. Go figure. For fans of Vonnegut, the weirder side of Dahl, or even Palahniuk, who often wondered what no-names of today will be remembered as this generation's quirky, dark wingnuts, here is a sneak peek at a handful of the author's favorite at the moment. Quick introductions to a splattering of modern trans / punk horror, horror time travel comedy, and other sci-fi influenced drama horror writers. The combos are endless. This is actually pretty rad. How did I not know about almost all of these weirdos? I'm actually excited to find some of this shit. (DZ)
benafitts@gmail.com

DO YOU STILL HATE ME?
$3 / 12 pgs
The subtitle of this zine, which is part of the Queer Anxiety Babiez distro family, is "A zine about social anxiety and growing up." Maira tells how it's been living with mental illness and trying to negotiate social interactions. There are stories of how it manifests in different areas of their life and the things they do to cope with it. I found their description of the contradiction between one's presentation and behavior and the internal state particularly relatable. It's not so easy to describe the experience of anxiety, but Maira does it in a way that is understandable to those who don't experience it and a comfort to those who do. The zine closes with two questions to which I would love to know the answers: 'how do people make friends as adults?" and "does this ever get easier?" Note: there is a content warning for discussion of drugs, self-harm, and mental illness. (NR)
mairaandthejorts@gmail.com

EVERYBODY SK8'S ZINE #2
$5 / 56 pgs
"Because skate culture has been predominantly focused on narratives of white, hetero, cis-gendered men," Jess Wu-O has made a zine centering the stories of womxn of color and / or non-binary people of color who skate. *Everybody Sk8's Zine #2* features interviews, artwork, and photography from 23 "poc, womxn, trans, and non-binary skaters." Each interview, art piece, and photo illustrates their relationship to skateboarding. For instance, there's Ash, who "just woke up one day and decided I was gonna learn to skate." Ariana says, "Skateboarding will never let me down or leave me." According to Vet, "Skateboarding has introduced me to the raddest, most supportive and closest friends I've had on this planet." *Everybody Sk8's Zine 2* will introduce you to rad individuals who are carving spaces for themselves in skateboarding. (GM)
mixedricezines.storenvy.com

FEMPIRE FATALE STRIKES BACK #3
free / 18 pgs
The bulk of this full-page sized zine from Australia is four awesome interviews: Soakie (Australia), Morte Lenta (Australia), Fuse (Singapore), and our very own co-coordinators at *MRR*, Miranda and Joan. From the surprisingly detailed within their short length interviews, I'm solidly sold on the awesomeness of the three bands, and I'm starting to think that this *MRR* thing might be pretty cool. They also cram a few pages of record reviews in there, which you can never go wrong with. This is an excellent zine analog to the "girls to the front!" rally cry. This will be something I'm happy to find in my bookshelf again someday. (RH)
femfstbk@gmail.com

FIGURATIVE THEATER #1
£3 / 52 pgs
Pretty rad, well put together, printed, photo zine. All black and white 35mm shots of bands screaming and wailing and shit, and even one liberty spiked kid just contemplating their next beer, and not a bad one of the bunch. Punk photo zines are weird for me, as I'm always thinking that the better the action shot looks, it's more likely that the photographer stood in the front row, taking hundreds of garbage photos for each good one, bumming everyone out. I sure do like the finished output, though, so I guess I should shut my mouth. Shot over a span of three years and all over Europe, this zine shows punk as pretty fucking wild, diverse, angry, manic, spastic, and still fucking fun. Check it. (DZ)
simonmarsham@gmail.com / figurative--theater.tumblr.com

FIXER ERASER #5
free / 24 pgs
This issue of Fixer Eraser is a collection of six very short stories that may or may not be fictional. Jonas describes it as "part perzine and part fiction." Each is a vignette that speaks to the loneliness inherent

in everyday life, questioning whether connection is possible or even desirable. Some are a little like ear hustling the conversation of strangers. They are well-crafted and to the point. A good read. (NR)
Jonas, P.O. Box 633, Chicago, IL 60690

HEADWINDS #2
£1.50 / 24 pgs
British music rag *Headwinds* has expanded somewhat in their second issue to include reviews alongside their comics and interviews. This zine is written by an older chap who clearly has been involved with punk for quite some time, as evidenced by both the interviewees (Subhumans side-project Culture Shock and the newly-reformed Proletariat) and the comics, one of which is even about older punks revisiting their glory days in a council estate show. Some of the writing strikes me as a bit dull, and other sections seem a bit undercooked (especially the column where the author discusses his period of homelessness and the two comics). The highlights are certainly the interviews, but even these are a bit short and could use a bit more zest. Perhaps this could show improvement by narrowing the focus to merely a couple of these sections instead of the mixed bag here. (JD)
headwindszine@gmail.com

MARIPOSA #1
$3 / 12 pgs
Mariposa (Spanish for "butterfly") is a bilingual poetry zine by e.itzel, a "queer brown girl currently living on occupied Chinook land. she is anti-state, anti-prisons, anti-borders." The poems she has written and published in this zine reflect her identities and politics, and through her writing, she fearlessly combats white supremacy and gender oppression. In "all of the white women you have dated look the same," she says, "you can love 10 white women / and i'll still be a bad bitch / you will not stop me from honoring my fire." Such prose is emblematic of the defiant stance she takes in *Mariposa*, the introduction to which reads: "1312 / 1312 / 1312 / 1312 / rest in in power to all those who have been killed at the hands of white supremacy u.s. imperialism state violence / our power is immortal." Keep writing, keep fighting! (GM)
babiephat1312@gmail.com

PUNK ROCK RADUNO #3
€5 / 50 pgs
This looks like the zine they either give you for free or charge you a little extra for as you enter the Punk Rock Raduno fest in Bergamo, Italy. For what it's worth, I'm sure it's a good time for the fans. If you love the Queers, CJ Ramone, surviving members of Screeching Weasel, and other old timer pop punk, you might have missed out on your summertime cheap beer and three chords fun time. Despite being black and white on the outside, the inside is full color, with seemingly emailed interviews of the aforementioned acts, plus a handful of other slick hair / slick production bands like Bomb Pops and Jagger Holly. Not the kind of punk that I call home, but shit, go for it, y'all. (DZ)
punkrockraduno.com

RIOT 77 #20
€3 / 52 pgs
This is a really nice looking zine! Full-size, glossy black and white pages, and the layouts are interesting and show care for the magazine's overall aesthetic. The writing ain't bad either; I appreciate, for example, the author's critical review of *Teenage Kicks: My Life as an Undertone* by Undertones bassist Mickey Bradley. But I just don't get the point of this all! The vast majority of content, whether it's interviews, live reviews, or album reviews, is centered around re-formed (or continuing) bands from the '70s. While I know that we can all be surprised from time to time by just how good a nostalgia act still is, I just cannot think of many things less exciting than a bunch of old men trying to prove that they're still punk. And when I say men, I mean it; by my count, out of the 60 people pictured in interviews or reviews, there are two women featured—and that's counting Peg of the Gories lurking in the background of a few photos in the Mick Collins interview. I mean, a lot of thought obviously went into this zine, so...there's one more thing to think about, dude. (MF)
PO Box 11342, Dublin 2, Ireland / riot77magazine@hotmail.com

SHOES FANZINE #8
$3 / free to prisoners / 70 pgs
This interview zine is top notch. So many zines based heavily around interviews fall into the trap of interviewing only bands that just came through on tour and getting stuck in a cycle of asking the same questions over and over instead of seeking out truly inspired interview subjects. The interviewer here, Nate, finds interesting people and tries to highlight what makes them interesting while letting them tell their own story. In this issues, there are five lengthy interviews: Will, who started a small town chapter of Anti-Racist Action and took on the local neo-nazis, Matt Hern, a Vancouver activist who Nate is catching up with after ten years, Karmin, who sailed across the Pacific Ocean over seven months with her estranged father, Shellshag, a duo of DIY stalwarts and road dogs, and Aaron Cometbus, who you should already know from his namesake zine. There's not a weak link here amongst the five, but I particularly enjoyed Karmin's story. Also, having Cometbus re-answer the same questions from an interview in 1999 was a fun experiment to read. Highly recommended reading for lunch breaks and public transit commutes. (RH)
Nate, Shoes Fanzine, PO Box 88023, Chinatown, Vancouver, BC, V6A 4A4 Canada / shoesfanzine@hotmail.com

SPARE CHANGE #36
$3 or trade / 40 pgs
This issue is the first collection of flyers and stories about the zinester's home venue, Anarchtica, in Chattanooga, TN. The wide variety of flyers reprinted within is super fun, especially if you've been handed hundreds of handmade flyers in your life. The stories of the venue will feel familiar to most punks while still telling the story of one specific, special place. I especially felt drawn into a telling of the venue being reviewed in a local newspaper, since the same thing happened in my college town, almost killing the venue. No punk wants their house venue put out there to the public for fear of being shut down, which is too often the case. The title story, "Is Chattanooga Always Like This?," will make you hungry for part two of this series to come out. This is a super high quality collection of punk memories. (RH)
Spare Change, PO Box 6023, Chattanooga, TN 37401

SPIKE ANARKIE'S REVENGE #2
$1 / 16 pgs
This zine from a Berkeley High School punk is rough, but the energy and excitement is super fun. This kid is going places if they keep at it. It feels like an open mic zine made of various musings that are in the works, but it's fun to see the process. Thoughts on the D-beat genre and working at Gilman are good reads. The author seems to think their take on the March For Our Lives is something "nobody asked for," but every take on it is valid and important, especially for the age group most actively involved today. An attempt at satire ("praise be upon our Lord Jordan Peterson") is unrefined but still super amusing. Go ahead and check this out! (RH)
Otto, 924 Gilman St., Berkeley, CA 94707 / Ott68374@gmail.com

SWEPT AWAY
$10 / 74 pgs
I can confidently say that this is one of the must-have zines of 2018. If you don't even bother reading further and pick this up, you will find a treasure that will not disappoint you. If you need more convincing, though, I suppose I can provide that. *Swept Away* is a collection of essays, poetry, art, and other words from a wide swath of contributors assembled by Bethany Ridenour of Bristle & Stick Handcrafted Brooms. One strong plus is that the entire zine is bilingual in both Spanish and English. The subtitle, "a collection of writings and art on empowerment through cleaning," gives a general idea of what to expect, but the journey through every one of the over one dozen contributors' personal rituals and experience with cleansing as ritual is hard to describe in words and better experienced yourself. Bethany opens the collection by introducing herself with a brief version of her personal story and how she discovered her passion for ancestral skills and merging the mundanity of cleaning with the sacredness of ritual. This introduction then leads you directly into the river's flow of *Swept Away.* I was particularly drawn to a short essay by Dani LaVoire called "Reclaiming Death" that briefly advocates for the after-death care of your loved ones in your own home, which is surprisingly legal in every state with some restrictions that vary by location. The idea of caring for and cleansing your dead is a concept that now seems so foreign despite being commonplace only a few generations ago. The idea of ancestral ritual and reclaiming it is a theme that is revisited many times throughout the collection, and the value of having so many examples of it tied together here cannot be overstated. I should also mention the high quality printing and attention to detail put into the layout and design of the zine. It's truly wonderful to look at before you even read a single word. Do yourself a favor and add this zine to the schedule for your next self-care day. (RH)
oakandmadrone@gmail.com / www.etsy.com/shop/TortoiseAndTheBear

TOLEDO PONKEROS Vol. 2 #1
$1 / 14 pgs
As a former 419 punk myself, I was excited for this zine from Johnny Jacks (Los Jacks). Starting this issue, he has handed over the reigns to his pal, Tony P. Unfortunately, most of this will likely be lost on anyone that isn't currently in the Toledo, Ohio scene, as it provides very little insight outside of inside jokes. A few of the photos are so over-photocopied, you can't be sure that the subjects even have faces. The "Where Are They Now?" section is hard to follow without any background on the bands covered, and the gossip / "fake news" column is hard to find humorous without being involved enough to know where the jokes are. If you're in that scene, you'll probably enjoy this a lot, but anyone else with have a hard time making much of it. (RH)
TonyXcup, 2040 Alvin St., Toledo, OH 43607

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #154
$2 / 48 pgs
Kudos to *The Trouble with Normal* on its long history (154 issues and counting!) and coverage of Columbia, MO—I love to see coverage of smaller scenes, and it's something that I hope *MRR* can improve upon. I didn't find much of interest in this zine, though. Why so many show reviews beginning with descriptions of irrelevant personal details? Why so much blank white space? Why does the author sign their name to nearly every piece when it all appears to be written by the same person anyway? Why spend an impassioned five pages explaining how video games aren't to blame for mass shootings when it's been nearly twenty years since that line of reasoning was commonplace? So many choices here are baffling to me. I hope it's of more interest to those in the Columbia area. (MF)
PO Box 1444, Columbia, MO 65205 / ttwn@hotmail.com / thetroublewithnormal.tripod.com

TRUST #190
€3 / 64 pgs
The German analogue to *Maximum Rocknroll* returns with another sleek issue, this time including features on Phantom Winter, Refuse Records, Martin Büsser, Joseph Boys, Hank Wood, and Fairy Lights. Most of this zine is in German, which I don't understand a word of, but I will say that I am a big fan of the relatively minimal design (which is striking in its consistency, down to the way it utilizes the same font for every single page) and the way it allows photos (all of which are excellent!) to really pop out. Really makes me wish I understood German. (JD)
postfach 11 07 62, 28087 Bremen, Germany / trust-zine.de

VIOLINS AREN'T PUNK #2
$3 / 32 pgs.
When the title of the zine series is a disgruntled comment sent into *MRR*, you know it's going to be good—and it is. This issue features an interview with Priya Ray of the long-running band Kreamy 'Lectric Santa. Priya has been a punk since the '80s and describes her point of entry to punk, her experiences in some of the places she's lived, including Milwaukee in the '80s (yes, she saw Die Kreuzen) and Miami in the '90s, and the origin of KLS. She also describes what it's been like living with a disability while touring in a punk band and being involved in DIY, and the things she's creating to increase awareness of the civil rights of people living with disabilities. There is also a list of Priya's favorite violinists. I love seeing the lives of punks of color documented, and once again Osa delivers. I live for this shit. A gem. (NR)
shotgunseamstress@gmail.com / issu.com/shotgunseamstress

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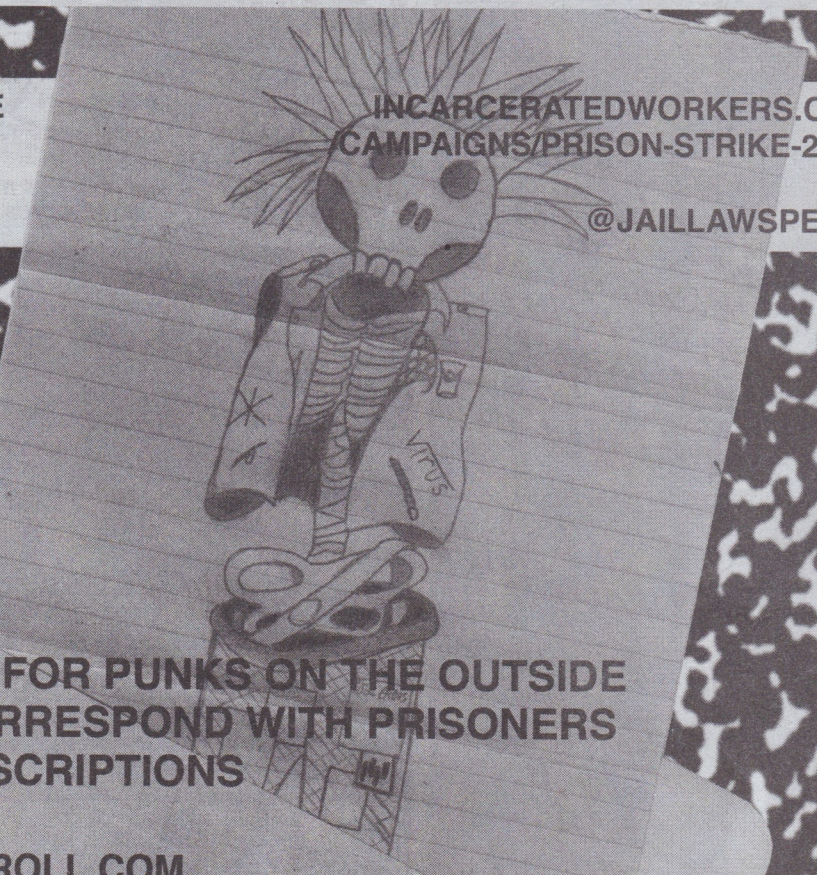

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DRAWING BY
JAMES COMPTON

M

All friendships should involve a good degree of jousting.
is a Sydney-based trio active since 2016 whose recen
Records has been purchased and listened to by a range o
consumers. They make weirdly anthemic drum-machine
that switches from distanced to sincere, ambivalent t
back again. In an era where the stakes around who g
about what could scarcely be higher, a band of men
willing to consider their place in all this is nothing if n
up my boots for a scenic tour of some Australia's fines
Dan (Bass) and Tim himself (vocals, Drum machine.) Ori
the power of personae, occasionally treacherous sor
morality, and excommunication in both punk and relig
we cut through some bluster, see the woods for the tre
slippery slopes, and arrive somewhere raw and real.

D THE B